the weekly
Standard
JUNE 19, 2000 • $3.95

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AL GORE
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the weekly Standard

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Al Gore's Favorite Newspaper

Last year, Frank Sutherland, editor of Nashville's *Tennessean*, paid personal tribute to Al Gore in a film produced by Gore's presidential campaign. Newsmen aren't supposed to behave that way, and Sutherland later apologized. "If I breached the credibility of my readers by appearing on that video I regret that," he allowed. "And I will work hard to repair that."

He should redouble his efforts.

Last week, an angry family in Carthage, Tennessee, went public about the squalid condition of the house they rent on Gore's inherited family property (see Matt Labash's cover story in this issue). The controversy had a local angle. And it was embarrassing to the vice president, so it represented a juicy opportunity for the *Tennessean* to prove it wasn't soft on Gore. You'd think Frank Sutherland would have rushed half his staff to Carthage.

But the *Tennessean* virtually ignored the story, running just a single, brief wire report about the misfortune of Gore's tenants. What kind of news judgment was that?

A *Tennessean* spokeswoman told Fox News Channel last week that the paper's own reporters were busy covering the state legislature and could not be spared for a trip to Gore's farm. She claimed the *Tennessean* intended to adopt subsequent coverage of the story by Larry Bivins of Gannett News Service.

Which was news to Bivins, who follows the presidential campaign for Gannett—and works in Washington. "That's a Tennessee story," Bivins told THE SCRAPBOOK. "I would think someone there would be covering it."

Nope. It's all the news that's fit to print at the *Tennessean*—except the stuff that's bad for good ol' Al. ♦

John Rocker's Latest Punishment

Since we published Dennis Prager's essay on John Rocker two weeks ago ("Hating John Rocker: A Case Study in Liberal Hysteria"), the Atlanta Braves reliever has been demoted to the minors—ostensibly to regain his control. But his 3.85 ERA is better than the major league average, and it seems the issue isn't really Rocker's control at all, but the eagerness of sports authorities to enforce political sensitivity.

Sometimes.

Remember Rocker's original offense. He expressed disdain for single motherhood, immigration, and homosexuality in a *Sports Illustrated* interview. Those aren't THE SCRAPBOOK's opinions exactly, and Rocker's choice of words—he described one of his black teammates as a "monkey"—leaves something to be desired. But the ostracism and obloquy to which he's been subjected nevertheless seems altogether hysterical. Especially when Rocker's thought crimes are compared with what looks like big-time sports' most alarming example of violent race hatred in many years.

At 2:30 A.M. on May 14, Rashard Casey, Penn State University's star quarterback, was out with friends in his hometown of Hoboken, N.J. He spotted white off-duty cop Patrick Fitzsimmons, the Hoboken Police Department's "tolerance training instructor." Fitzsimmons was with a black woman.

Casey and a friend berated the woman for associating with a white man. Then they beat Fitzsimmons unconscious—and kicked him even after he stopped moving. The entire incident was captured on security cameras mounted across the street. Casey was arrested six blocks away, his boots still spattered with Fitzsimmons's blood. Police call Casey's assault on Fitzsimmons a "racially motivated" attack.

So how have Penn State and the nation's talking heads reacted? With zero tolerance, just as in John Rocker's case? Casey might have *died*, after all.

Well, Penn State coach Joe Paterno has refused to condemn his quarterback. The university has merely opened an "investigation." Casey's high school guidance counselor says he's "100 percent behind him." And you're probably reading about the whole thing for the first time right here.

Maybe if Casey had called Fitzsimmons a monkey . . . ♦

A Judge the Senate Should Reject

Senate Republicans took conservative fire last month for initially accepting the nomination of Bruce Lindsey's attorney, Allen Snyder, to a federal appeals court. That criticism stalled Snyder's judgeship. But an even loopier White House nomination remains alive. Bonnie Campbell is up for an appellate appointment. She shouldn't get it.

Campbell was prominent in Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign. In 1994 she ran for governor of Iowa. And she created quite a stir while she was at it, with assaults on Christian conservatives like this one: "I hate to call them Christian because I am Christian, and I hate to call them religious, because they're not, so I'll call them the radical right. You know who I'm talking about. These are the people that get their orders from God. . . ."

Campbell was likewise critical of

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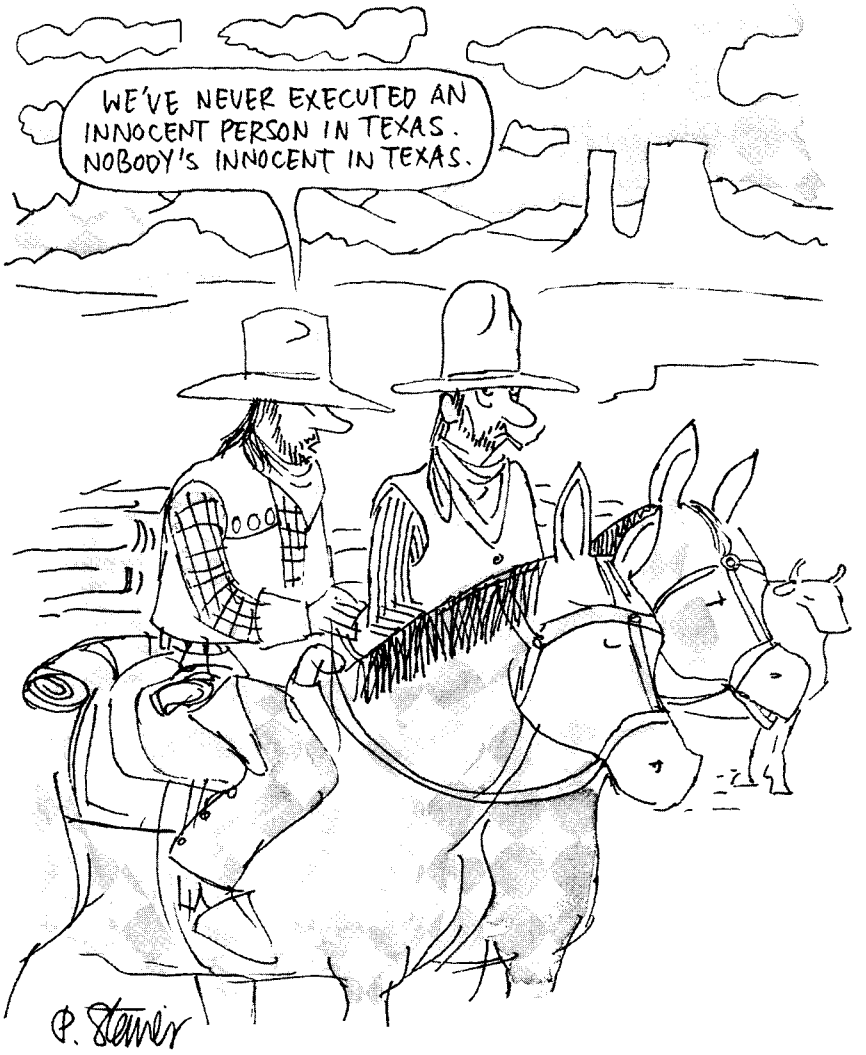

"anti-tax groups" and other "extremists." And she also forgot to pay Social Security taxes on her housekeeper. No surprise, then, that Iowans overwhelmingly rejected Campbell's gubernatorial candidacy. She's a nasty piece of work.

In an election year, the Senate historically places controversial judicial nominations on hold. Critical lifetime posts should be filled by a newly elected president, the theory goes, not by a lame duck. It's an excellent theory, and it should be rigorously applied in Campbell's case. The federal bench deserves better. Memo to Orrin Hatch and the Senate Judiciary Committee: Stall this nomination to death. ♦

Isikoff on Clinton and Lippo

The paperback edition of Michael Isikoff's bestseller on the Lewinsky saga, *Uncovering Clinton*, has just hit the bookstores. It includes a freshly penned "Afterword" wherein interested readers can find the following remarkable account of how exactly Bill Clinton got elected president in the first place:

> In the fall of 1999 . . . [a] House committee obtained copies of hundreds of pages of previously secret FBI debriefings of John Huang. . . . In these talks, Huang for the first time laid out the origins of the so-called Asian connection to the White House—a story that actually began four years before the widely publicized abuses of the 1996 election. In August 1992, during a campaign trip to California, Clinton had taken a limousine ride with Huang's employer, James Riady, the billionaire chief of the Lippo Group. . . . Riady offered to pump $1 million into Clinton's presidential campaign . . . . Over the next several weeks, Riady made good on his pledge. Massive wire transfers began. As ultimately documented by federal investigators, hundreds of thousands of dollars from Lippo's bank accounts in Asia flowed to Lippo employees and Lippo-owned corporations in the United States. These employees and companies in turn then wrote contribution checks recommended by Clinton's campaign operatives in Little Rock. The contributions were in most cases doubly illegal: Not only did they come from a foreign source, but they were also funneled through "conduits" to disguise the true identity of the giver. Meanwhile, Riady and his wife also wrote large "soft money" checks under their own names—but they were distributed to state parties around the country where the national press never noticed them. By the time election day came around, James Riady's Lippo Group—a foreign corporation whose existence was virtually unknown in official Washington, much less to the American public—had become the largest single financier of Clinton's campaign against President George Bush, dwarfing the donations of trial lawyers, labor unions and other traditional Democratic Party "soft money" givers.
>
> That Clinton and his entourage kept all this hidden from the public for years is, at a minimum, an impressive testament to their ability to conceal from the public that which is politically awkward. For such a man, waving his finger at the public and denying an illicit sexual relationship with a young intern must have seemed small beer—and nothing to cause undue anguish.

THE SCRAPBOOK couldn't have said it better. ♦

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Casual

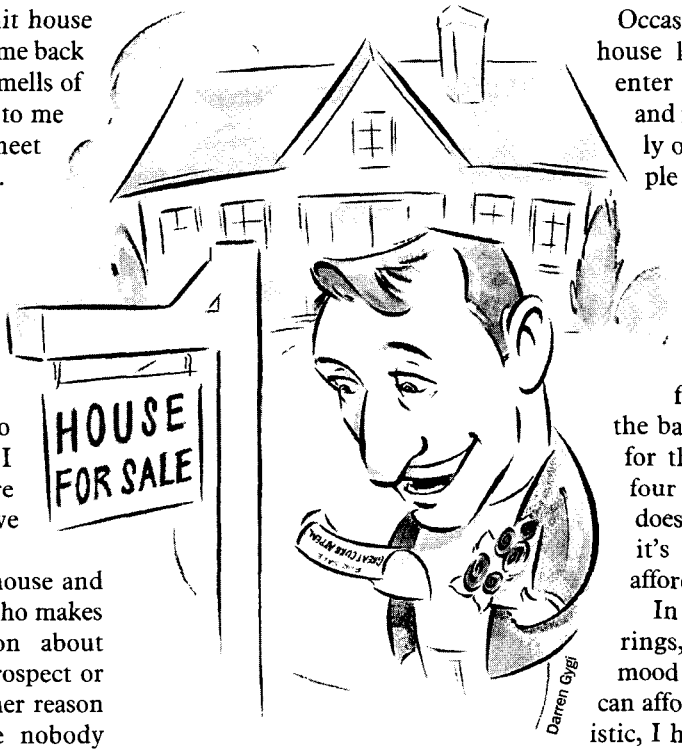
Man of the House

Though I own my house and have made certain commitments to it, I've begun sneaking out and seeing other houses on Sunday afternoons. The homes I spend time with are flashier and younger than the one I live in. They put ads in the Sunday paper announcing their availability and thrusting their charms before the public. "Open 2-5," they declare. "Great Curb Appeal! . . . Won't Last!" And so I go out and commit house adultery. In the evening I come back to my same old house, the smells of those other houses clinging to me and the realtor's fact sheet crammed in my back pocket.

Often I take my wife and kids along on my dirty weekends, and my kids now practically break down in tears when I announce that we're going to see some houses. They say they don't want to go because it's so boring, but I think they sense that we're cheatin'. I insist, and off we go.

You walk into an open house and you're greeted by a realtor who makes a two-millisecond decision about whether you're a serious prospect or just a browser. That's another reason to take the kids, because nobody would go through the trauma of dragging kids along to an open house unless they were seriously planning to move. Either way, you get to spend the next ten minutes traipsing through someone else's dwelling while they're not there.

This being Washington, people try to make their homes look impressive. I visited one house where every chair in the dining room had a little Harvard logo etched on the back. I visited another that was owned by a fellow who'd apparently been invited to give a lot of high school commencement addresses. As you walked up the stairs there was a series of black and white photographs of him standing at various podiums in cap and gown, gesturing to a series of student audiences. I presume he wasn't lecturing them on the importance of humility. Quite frequently the coffee table in the living room will be weighted down with an imposing tome, one of the volumes of Henry Kissinger's memoirs, say, or a biography of Dean Acheson. It's as if the owner had just been sitting there contemplating the transition from a bipolar to a multipolar world when the realtor burst in and told him he had to leave because the buyers were coming. I could swear I've seen the same copy of the Dean Acheson biography in four different houses.



But actually, I don't spend all my time making sociological observations on the previous owner. I spend more time fantasizing about what I could do with his house if I owned it. I'm a bit the way Reagan was when he went to Berlin. I imagine myself walking around the house declaring, "Contractor, tear down this wall!" On my first walk through I can usually imagine how much nicer the house would be if the wall between the kitchen and the dining room were gone, and the wall between the kitchen and the playroom, and so on. I'm perfectly à la mode in this taste for open spaces, because when you walk into a newly built house, there are no walls anywhere except the exterior ones. It's just a big open cavern, and you begin to think we're headed back to the middle ages, when people lived in castle keeps with no privacy whatsoever.

Occasionally, I'll get consumed by house lust. This happens when I enter a house that has a kitchen and family room that open directly onto the backyard. Some people have a weakness for big master baths, I suppose, or grand porches. But I imagine myself sitting at the breakfast table finally getting a chance to read the Sunday paper while my kids frolic silently (somehow) in the backyard. I get a great hunger for the house. It's only three or four days later that I realize it doesn't have enough bedrooms or it's $200,000 more than I can afford.

In the 1970s people had mood rings, but I can measure my own mood by how much house I think I can afford. When I'm glum and realistic, I have a certain top number in my head, but when I'm buoyant, the sky's the limit. A home is the only important thing money can buy, I tell myself, so splurge. What is America all about but real estate? That's what Henry Hudson was looking for. That's what the pioneers wanted. And sometime this summer I'm actually going to buy a house. I'm going to commit. I'm going to move into one of the houses I visit, and I'm going to start tearing down walls.

David Brooks

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On Target

H.R. 2944 & Electricity

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Correspondence

Rocker Mania

I HAVE TAKEN MY FAIR SHARE of criticism for defending John Rocker's right to say what he said, but I find the larger theme of Dennis Prager's article unconvincing ("Hating John Rocker," June 5). Prager is using a rather small incident to build a case for a much larger theme—that liberals are hatemongers and enemies of free speech.

For example, Prager correctly cites the tendency of some on the left to use terms like "racist" or "bigot" in circumstances where that isn't warranted. This certainly bothers intellectually honest people on the left. But then Prager actually asks, "Can you now list the comparable pejorative, dismissive, hate-filled terms in common use by conservatives?" Actually, Prager's article is an obvious demonstration of a well-worn conservative tactic—the use of "liberal" as a one-size-fits-all pejorative. Conservatives have worked very hard over the last generation or so to turn the word liberal into an epithet, and they have largely succeeded.

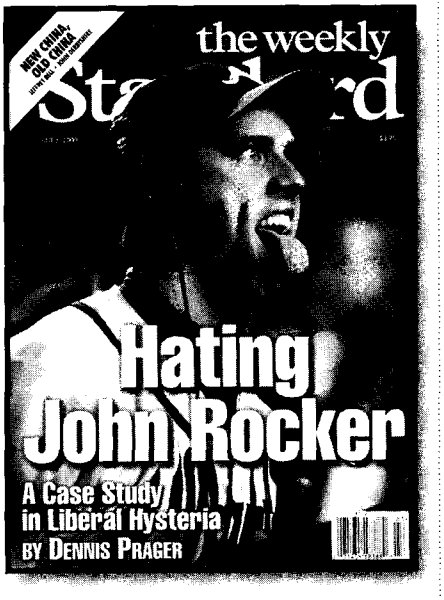
Sports Illustrated deserves criticism for pursuing Rocker and then acting shocked when it got exactly what it was after, but that does not change the fact that Rocker said what he said. I thought conservatives were big proponents of individual responsibility. Is it now the "liberal media's" fault that Rocker thinks immigrants have no right to come to America?

JOSEPH HAAS
Arlington, VA

DENNIS PRAGER'S "Hating John Rocker" summarizes the situation well, but misses one point that most other summaries also have glossed over: Why has there been no discussion of *Sports Illustrated*'s responsibility in printing the article? *SI* could have indicated in a sidebar that Rocker expressed opinions not fit for the ears of its readers. Instead, the writer chose to quote Rocker at length, presumably knowing that printing these quotes could harm or destroy Rocker's career and make the pitcher a possible target for physical violence. For all we know, the writer could have been baiting Rocker after gaining his confidence, in order to elicit self-destructive quotes. Has *Sports Illustrated* apologized to the public or to Rocker for its recklessness?

JACK PENKROT
Pittsburgh, PA

LEAVE IT TO THE WEEKLY STANDARD and Dennis Prager to find the expression "fat monkey" directed at an African-American inoffensive and one to be ignored or downplayed. The poor sense of history characteristic of conservatives when it comes to American race relations howls from Prager's words. Jackie Robinson heard far worse throughout his career than Rocker has,



and he received very little, if any, public support from leading conservatives of his day. Dave Parker, whose only two offenses were that he was a black ballplayer and earned plenty of money, ducked batteries thrown at him while playing right field for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

As for Prager's charge that there is no list of conservative hate words, THE WEEKLY STANDARD and the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* regularly refer to liberal Democrats as "corrupt," "soft on crime," "apologists for criminals," "politically correct," "destroyers of Western Civilization," and "defenders of deviancy."

RICHARD CURRIE
Staten Island, NY

AMERICA IS UNDERGOING intensive sensitivity training. Never mind having to sentence some crude and wayward thinker to a special tolerance class—the whole country's already attending. John Rocker still lives in America, and still has the right of free speech. In a perfect world all would treat others as they would like to be treated, but since we will never find perfection in this life, we must personally strive to do right, while ever guarding our unique and privileged right as Americans to think and speak freely.

We'd better get off this national hysteria of trying to police every single unpleasant personal expression and categorize it as hate speech or we'll soon find ourselves unable to verbalize anything but what is permitted by our government.

TERRI G. JACKSON
Virginia Beach, VA

We Admit Nothing

I ENJOYED JOHN PODHORETZ'S article on Bill Murray, but how can you possibly write that article without a mention of Bill Murray's single greatest performance as Carl in *Caddyshack* ("Bill Murray's Polonius," June 5)? I realize it may be a little lowbrow, but I assume many of you at THE WEEKLY STANDARD are golfers, and whether you admit it publicly or not, you love that movie and you love Murray's role in it.

BILL RUDLAND
Mason, OH

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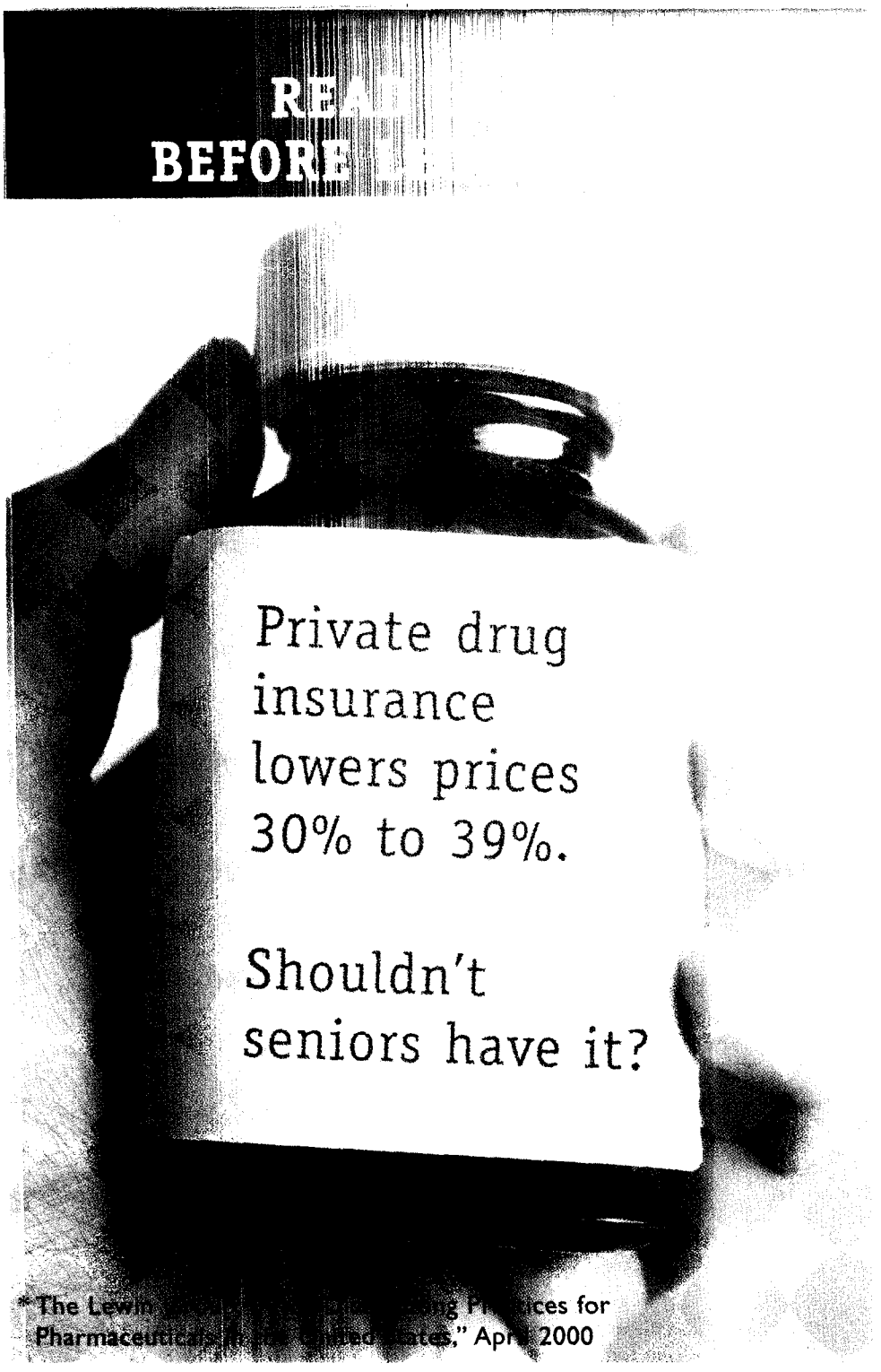

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the weekly Standard

Against the Wet Foot/Dry Foot Test

Two Cuban baseball players—the star Andy Morales, the record-holding slugger who helped Cuba defeat the Baltimore Orioles with a dramatic three-run homer in an exhibition game last year; and Carlos Borrego, whose only record consists in his having been caught nine times by the Cuban Coast Guard while trying to escape the tropical prison that is Fidel Castro's Cuba—were apprehended by U.S. immigration authorities on a speedboat in the Caribbean last week.

And we sent them back.

What a disgrace. Immigration and Naturalization Service spokeswoman Maria Cardona says we sent them back because their worries about Fidel Castro's Communist dictatorship didn't rise to the "credible fear threshold." According to Cardona, "To pass the credible fear threshold they would have to demonstrate that they would be persecuted or physically harmed if they were to be returned to their home country."

This is *raison d'état* masquerading as legalism. There is prima facie evidence that both Morales and Borrego, as defecting celebrities, will be persecuted. New York Yankees pitcher Orlando "El Duque" Hernández was kicked off the Cuban national team—and condemned to residence in a concrete shack and a life swabbing floors in a provincial elementary school—when his half-brother Liván defected to the United States. But let's not dwell on hypotheticals: Last Thursday, the Cuban government issued an official attack on Morales, saying he was past his prime as a ballplayer. Furthermore, sources in the Morales family say that he has already been informed he won't be invited when Cuba's baseball team goes to the summer Olympic games in Australia in September.

There is a name for this kind of government action: persecution. Sorry, Maria Cardona, but those who fear persecution in Cuba—baseball players or not—fear it "credibly."

The INS is reversing 40 years of sound Cuba policy. That's why we won't be able to take the Elián González case and "put it behind us" until the Cuban people are able to put persecution behind them. The events of last week indicate that, while Elián may be headed back to Cuba, the muddled American thinking that denied Elián González an asylum hearing persists. It is now crystal clear that if nothing is done to correct our current policy, others fleeing totalitarianism will be denied due process just as Elián was.

The Clinton administration wants to cozy up to Communist Cuba. It is not obvious why. But the more we learn about the Elián González case, the uglier it looks. Documents unearthed by a Judicial Watch Freedom of Information Act request, dated in mid-January, show the U.S. government colluding with Castro against the Cuban people. There are two documents. In the first, a mid-level administration official writes: "DOS [the State Department] wants to have a daily conference call to coordinate press guidance and communications with the Cubans. They have lots of questions concerning the timing of litigation." It adds: "Have we coordinated this with the press office and the chief of staff's office?" So much for the president's "hands-off" policy on the Elián case.

The second document involves the visit of Elián's grandmothers to the United States in late January of this year, an idea that the administration tried to fob off as having originated with the grandmothers themselves. "DM [INS commissioner Doris M. Meissner] was firm about not having any INS involvement in this initiative. If our conversations in Cuba can proceed with the understanding that INS would not be involved, then DM would be most interested in hearing more about this idea." The letter adds a reading of the Eleventh Circuit court proceeding that belies the administration's claim that it was merely waiting for legal guidance on Elián's fate. ("The judge's decision is unlikely to contain clear cut language re the disposition of Elian.")

Our big question is: Who are "the Cubans" here? An anonymous administration source has tried to claim that the phrase refers to the U.S. government's Cuban interests section in Havana. Malarkey: No one calls the staff of our embassy in Paris "the French."

Justice Department spokeswoman Carole Florman, responding to such allegations, says: "Oh, please. These are internal documents between U.S. government agencies about how we are going to deal with a foreign government.

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. . . They clearly state that Doris didn't want to be involved." But they don't. What they clearly state is that Meissner didn't want to be *seen* to be involved. It sounds to us as if the administration was colluding with the Cuban government to launch a PR campaign on the American people. The last we noticed, it was the job of executive agencies to protect the interests of the American people, not those of the Cuban government.

There's a classic Clinton excuse for this wobbliness on Cuba that we hear over and over. It's: "This happens every day, and no one notices when it doesn't involve a baseball player." We plead guilty. We're more fascinated by the travails of El Duque Hernández than by those of José Fulano de Tal. But now that we've noticed, let us declare that we're ashamed of our country's willingness to send Cubans *of any description* back to a life of indigence and terror.

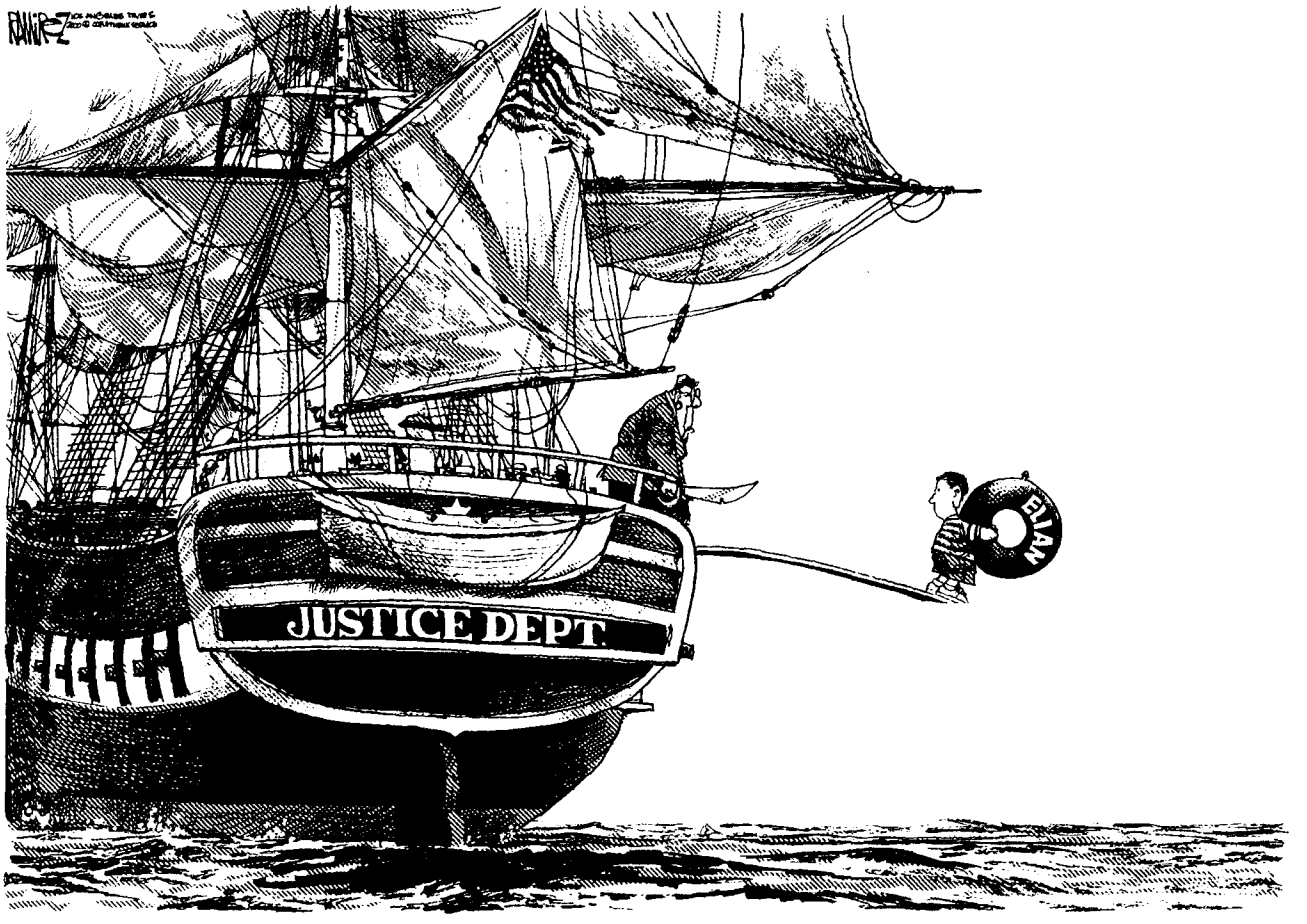
It is time to extend a more generous welcome. To be more specific, it is time for Congress to reverse the executive orders of 1994 and 1995 that tore into tatters the Cuban Adjustment Act. That legislation, dating from the Johnson administration, held that any Cuban found in international waters was eligible for American citizenship. Today, Cubans are subjected to a wet foot/dry foot test. If you're on the beach, you're in. If not, wet-suited goons will wade out to push you onto a boat and send you back to Cuba. This is barbarism.

The Clinton administration has a fallback. It asks: "What's so special about Cuba?" The Clintonites confront us with claims of hypocrisy. Haitians are coming here all the time, they say, and you don't want to let *them* in! Let us hereby call their bluff. We say to the Clinton administration: You declare Haiti, whose politics are still dominated by the left-wing demagogue Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Communist mess that it is in fact becoming, and we'll declare the same policy for Haiti as for Cuba.

Okay, this is an idealistic point of view. But if you want to be more "realistic": We undermine our trustworthiness as a nation and as a people when we break our promises. And when we yield to pressure. Don't think other nations don't notice.

Besides, Cubans *are* special. We favor loosening Fidel Castro's Communist stranglehold over Cuba by any means necessary—if he threatens a flotilla of refugees, we would suggest sending aircraft carriers to welcome them and bring them to our shores—as if the Cold War were still going on. Because the Cold War *is* still going on for those freedom-loving millions in Cuba who kept faith with the United States and trusted that the United States would keep faith with them.

—Christopher Caldwell, for the Editors



Michael Ramirez

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Absolutely Fabiani

The Gore campaign hires the Democratic Master of Disaster, Mark Fabiani. BY MATTHEW REES

AL GORE and the reporters who tail him have a strained relationship. He feels the coverage of his campaign has been excessively negative; they resent his seldom making himself available for their questions. The solution may be Gore's new deputy campaign manager for communications, Mark Fabiani, who is unique in the fraternity of political flacks: He's liked and respected by the people he works for—and by the reporters he spins.

Fabiani's reputation stems primarily from his work in 1995-96 as the White House's spokesman on ethics. Spending the vast majority of his time on Whitewater and Vince Foster, he quickly established himself as honest, cooperative, and forthright in responding to reporters' questions (a striking contrast with his predecessor, John Podesta, and his successor, Lanny Davis). From his first day on the job, he called for a break with the White House's practice of withholding documents from Congress and the public, pushing instead for full disclosure.

At the time, his strategy was counterintuitive. Why, wondered many White House officials—including Hillary Clinton—would we voluntarily air our dirty linen? Because, reasoned Fabiani, the appearance of a coverup was more damaging than the facts of each individual case.

But there was more to Fabiani's disclosure strategy than just dumping thousands of pages of documents on reporters' desks. Having handled the press for Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, he knew a few tricks of the trade. One is to release embarrassing documents on Friday evenings going into holiday weekends so the material gets out when fewer people are attending to the news. Another is to selectively provide reporters with information unflattering to the White House. Since congressional Republicans would eventually publicize such information anyway, why not put it out on the White House's terms, then downplay it as old news when the GOP got it?

Mark Fabiani

Thus, it was Fabiani, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, who first gave the Associated Press a memo written by a onetime White House aide, David Watkins, that claimed Hillary Clinton had been deeply involved in the sacking of White House travel office employees. And it was Fabiani who first shared with reporters Mrs. Clinton's long-sought billing records from the Rose Law Firm.

For disclosures like these, and for his candor generally, Fabiani is still winning plaudits from the press. "He would answer my questions without misleading me, make documents available, and didn't seem to hold my newspaper against me," says Jerry Seper, a reporter with the conservative *Washington Times*.

Another Whitewater reporter, not known for being a Clinton shill, recalls Fabiani as a "straight shooter" who was "willing to concede the obvious" and wouldn't give "robotic answers straight from the talking points." Chris Vlasto, an investigative producer with ABC News who is loathed by Clintonites, pays Fabiani this compliment: "He is one of the only White House officials I'd like to go out and have a drink with."

Those who know Fabiani are not surprised by his success. The son of a policeman, he grew up in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania—Joe Namath's hometown—then moved to Ontario, California, as a teenager. In high school, he was a champion debater and twice came to Georgetown for debate camps. He had the good sense to befriend a guest lecturer at these camps, a rising star in Democratic politics named Robert Shrum. He and Shrum have remained close, and today Shrum, Gore's chief media strategist, is Fabiani's invaluable ally in the campaign's inner circle.

After college at the University of Redlands, Fabiani went to Harvard Law School, where he made law review and won the good opinion of professor Alan Dershowitz, who places him "among the handful of smartest students [he's] ever had." When Dershowitz was retained to assist in the defense of Claus von Bülow, a Danish socialite accused of

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attempted murder, Fabiani (then on leave from a clerkship with judge Stephen Reinhardt of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals) was the first person he asked to join him.

Fabiani's eight-year stint with Tom Bradley came next; in 1989, at the age of 32, he was promoted to chief of staff and became one of two deputy mayors. During his tenure, he tackled everything from the Los Angeles riots to the move of the Los Angeles Raiders, and skillfully navigated the city's political minefields. (The *Los Angeles Times* once wrote that he was "widely regarded as a brash, sharp-witted 'boy wonder.'") As Bradley was the subject of numerous ethics investigations, the work was invaluable training for his White House post.

When Bradley left office in mid-1993, choosing not to run for reelection, Fabiani could have cashed in by staying in Los Angeles. Instead, he moved to Washington to take an anonymous position in the Justice Department, handling speechwriting and policy development for Janet Reno (Ricki Seidman, a Democratic operative whom he'd met on the Dukakis campaign, recruited him for the position). Nine months later, he moved to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where he worked with Andrew Cuomo on enterprise zones.

Perfectly content at HUD, Fabiani received a call from Harold Ickes, the White House deputy chief of staff, in the spring of 1995. Ickes was looking for ideas on how best to handle Whitewater, and Fabiani told him full disclosure of documents would work best.

At their second meeting, according to Bob Woodward's book *Shadow*, Ickes didn't mince words: "I've told the president and the first lady you're going to take this job" as spokesman on Whitewater and related issues. Fabiani, who'd recently gotten married, said he didn't want such an all-consuming position, prompting Ickes to fly into a rage: "You're part of a team in this administration, and if we need you to move from one position to another, you ought to do it."

Fabiani relented, and with Al D'Amato's Whitewater hearings set to begin, he quickly tried to shift the White House from defense to offense. He gave an exclusive briefing to *Newsweek*'s Michael Isikoff on the Vince Foster suicide, providing him with reams of documents. The article that ensued, while not entirely flattering, did undermine many Republican claims about a White House coverup. Fabiani also began deriding the hearings as a partisan charade—D'Amato was an active supporter of Bob Dole's presidential bid—further compromised by D'Amato's own ethical transgressions. Before long, he also turned his guns on Ken Starr, yielding the first set of stories on the independent counsel's supposed conflicts of interest. For all his pit-bull instincts, though, Fabiani resisted the efforts of Hillary Clinton and Sidney Blumenthal to mount a campaign against reporter Susan Schmidt, who was covering the Clinton scandals for the *Washington Post*.

Fabiani quickly shifted the White House from defense to offense. He began deriding the Whitewater hearings as a partisan charade, then turned his guns on Ken Starr.

Fabiani's partner at the White House was Chris Lehane, a scrappy twentysomething just out of Harvard Law. These self-proclaimed "Masters of Disaster" quickly distinguished themselves with their command of Whitewater's mind-bending arcana, their success in turning press coverage from hostile to neutral (or nonexistent), and their flashy clothes (Fabiani is given to four-button suits; Lehane likes Armani). They were also responsible for cobbling together a report suggesting how baseless rumors entered the political debate. This provoked a storm of controversy with the insinuation of a vast right-wing conspiracy (a collection of New York City conservatives soon christened themselves "the Fabiani Society"). In the end, though, the duo proved so effective that Gore hired not only Fabiani to field press inquiries and bring more discipline to Gore's schedule and message, but also Lehane, who is now the campaign's chief spokesman.

Fabiani will, inevitably, be responding to scandal questions. Gore's fund-raising at the White House and the Buddhist temple hasn't been entirely laid to rest, nor have campaign chairman Tony Coelho's unsavory activities. It wasn't a good omen that Fabiani spent his first day on the job in Nashville, June 1, responding to charges that Gore, who rents out a house on his property in Carthage, Tennessee, is a slumlord.

That said, there's a wide consensus, in media and political circles, that Gore is lucky to have Fabiani on his side. Few people, however, know of Fabiani's most impressive achievement of all.

On January 26, 1996—the day of Hillary Clinton's grand-jury testimony—two men kidnapped him at gunpoint while he was walking from the subway to his home in Alexandria, Virginia. For three hours, they drove him from one ATM to another, forcing him to withdraw a total of $1,600 (they knew nothing of his White House employment). But Fabiani, a first-rate schmoozer, established such rapport with his abductors that they chose not to keep him overnight (he scotched their plan to have him cash a big check the next morning by telling them most banks are closed on Saturdays).

He even persuaded them to return the Rolex watch his late uncle had given him, as well as his cell phone and briefcase—and he got them to give him $10 for a taxi home. Had he been with them an hour longer, no doubt they would have returned all his money. ♦

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Our European Problem

The EU is becoming more anti-American than ever. BY JEFFREY GEDMIN

Munich

IT USED TO BE, when you passed through customs at a German airport, passport holders from European Union member states were funneled one way, the rest of us the other. The system remains intact, but with an important semantic update. The signs at Munich's Franz-Josef Strauss airport now read: "EU Staatsbürger—EU nationals" or, literally, citizens of the EU. In the "Free State" of Bavaria, of all places! He must be rolling over in his grave, the fiery nationalist governor after whom the airport is named. "EU national" ought to be a contradiction in terms, of course, if "national" relates to words like "nation" and "nationality."

As EU elites would have it, the EU national is a citizen of a federal state currently under construction. That's why Western European leaders have been transferring unprecedented amounts of sovereignty over the last decade from their liberal democratic nation-states (at times against the wishes of their own peoples) to supranational institutions. What's the primary motive behind the single currency or, for example, the EU's nascent Common Foreign and Security Policy? The intention is to consolidate power. There's no better way to enable "Europe," most Western European leaders believe, to compete in the post Cold War world. Okay. Notwithstanding questions about democracy, sovereignty, and accountability, that is.

But what does all this mean for the transatlantic relationship? "We Europeans want to assert ourselves as Europeans," says a French defense ministry official. Our lack of unity in the past meant "the Americans always had free rein," wrote the senior economist of one of Germany's leading banks in the German weekly *Der Spiegel* recently. Not surprisingly, then, Americans see Europe's new Security and Defense Policy, for example—the Western European ambition to beef up their military capability—as "burden-sharing"; Western Europeans see it mostly as an important step to "power-sharing." Okay, too. The Americans have said for years that they want the allies to become more self-reliant. Why get squeamish when they make noises in this very direction? Well, truth is there's an edge to this new Europe, and this time it's not just French.

When Italian towns adopt American death row prisoners to lobby for, it's hard to accept that the misplaced gesture arises merely from a sincere opposition to capital punishment. Everywhere in Europe you bump into the thesis that America is the "rogue superpower." When the dispute erupted this spring over Europe's (read: Germany's) candidate to lead the International Monetary Fund, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* labeled the U.S. approach as once more "America First through America's Fist." When Horst Koehler finally got the job, "Robin Hood returned home victorious," wrote the weekly *Die Zeit*, with "an important victory for Germany, indeed for Europe." Now, the other Europeans, including the French and the Italians, may not have been fond of the German candidate. But they quickly closed ranks to forge a common front against the Americans.

There are seemingly small but important self-deceptions that Republicans have come to engage in concerning foreign policy the last couple of years. One is that Europe matters less to the United States after the Cold War. They shouldn't forget that 95 percent of U.S. air lift during operation Desert Storm came through bases in Europe—for which there remains no viable alternative. The other delusion? That "strong" Republican leadership in the White House

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by itself will be enough to reverse the depletion of American credibility in the Alliance that Bill Clinton's feckless foreign policy has helped promote. It will help. But no matter who sits in the Oval Office, there's no escaping the fact that today, a less dependent Western Europe is redefining itself and renegotiating the transatlantic relationship.

The scales need to fall from American eyes. Once upon a time Europeans pursued integration as a means of overcoming the malign nationalism that ruined the continent in the first half of this century. "Now," concedes an adviser to the prime minister of one of the smaller, slightly Euroskeptical states, "the old destructive nationalism of the European nation-state may be slowly being replaced by a new Euro-nationalism." How better to define this nationalism than in opposition to the United States?

Not so, say the Eurocrats, of course. The EU just wants to pursue legitimate European Union interests in the world. But how should Americans understand the EU agenda of heterogeneous Europe? We know what French or British interests are, but what exactly is, say, the EU interest in the Middle East? Is there any reason to believe that Finland and Greece have more in common in their interests toward Iraq than do, let's say, Britain and the United States?

And what about Britain in all of this? Tony Blair wants to have his cake and eat it too. That means fully joining the new Europe and maintaining the UK's special relationship with the United States. The UK remains a special ally of the United States. We share intelligence with the Brits, for example, that we would never pass on to some of our other dear European friends.

Remember a year and a half ago when a French official working at NATO was caught passing NATO targeting plans for Kosovo to a Serb diplomat in Brussels? What happens when the Brits move closer to Europe and the French (and the Germans) exact a price for their influence on the continent? Crude questions? Samuel Huntington, hardly a hotheaded extremist, has already referred to the European Union as an anti-hegemonic coalition.

A hallmark of Clinton's foreign policy has been that others, adversaries as well as allies, set the agenda. We, in turn, are left to react and become the victims of the agendas of others. This leaves American foreign policy in a miserable state—and parts of the world in quite a fragile position. Governor Bush has hinted he favors a NATO-style alliance in Asia. He ought not forget that, if it is to serve as a model, the old NATO itself is in need of some serious work. ♦

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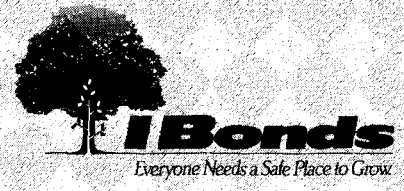

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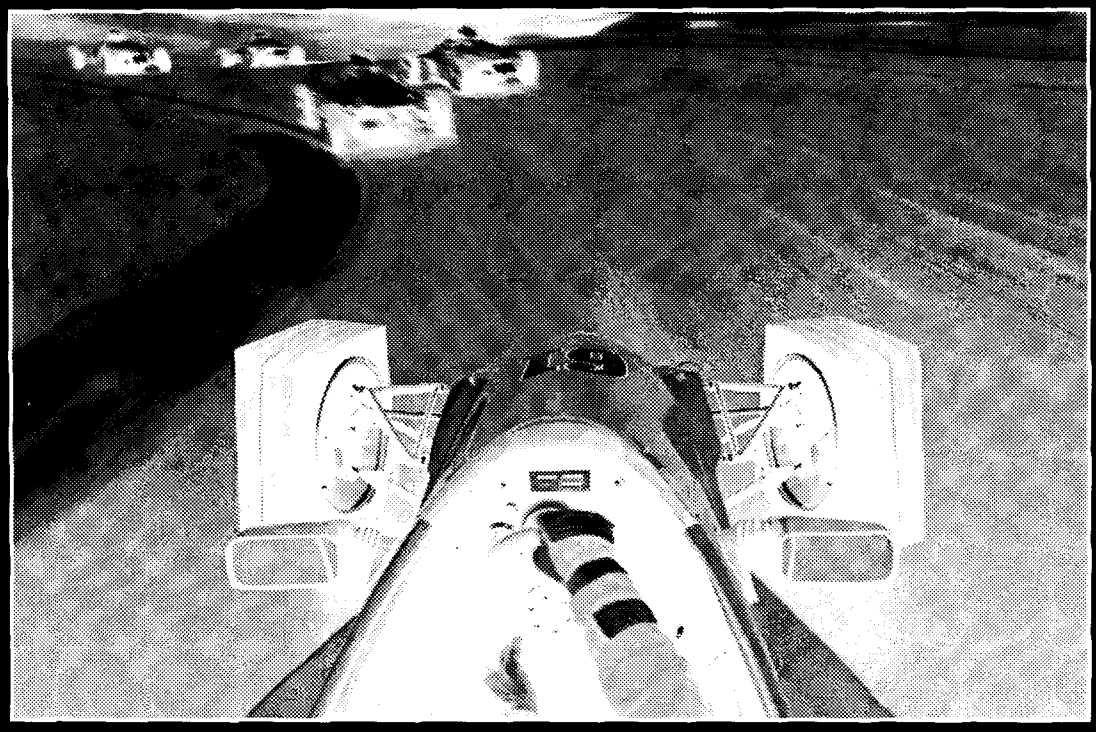
Electricity Competition: "Market Power" or "Power of the Market"?



Electricity competition promises many benefits for consumers. New services. New innovations. And, lower prices. That's the power of the market. True deregulation will deliver on the promises of competition.

But some people don't believe in real competition. They want to put more Federal regulations on shareholder-owned electric utilities in order to "curb" the so-called "market power" of these companies.

That doesn't make sense. Competition means letting markets work, not adding regulations.

There are already Federal and State mechanisms in place to protect consumers from anti-competitive practices. If we want consumers to have more choices, why would anyone want legislation that restricts their options?

Deregulation of electricity shouldn't add layers of new regulations. Congress should craft legislation that will bring about real competition and allow the market the freedom to work.

Let's consider the facts, not the sound bites.
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Reporters Don't Get Religion

And boy does it show when they have to write about it. BY DON FEDER

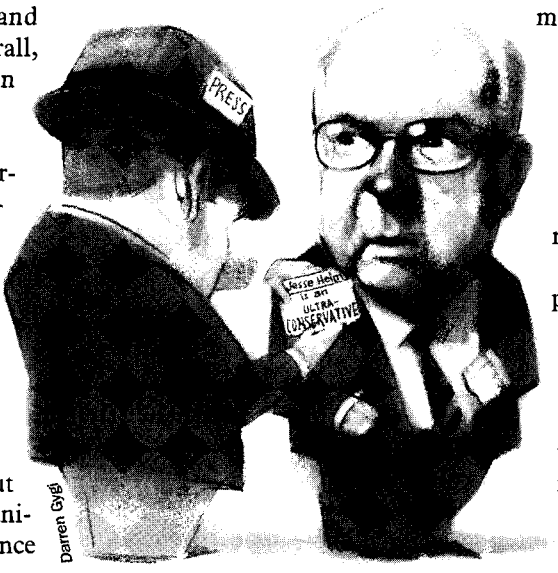
ACCORDING TO a just-released study by the Center for Media & Public Affairs, the American news media have performed a minor miracle: They have managed to cover religion without actually discussing religious doctrines.

"Media Coverage of Religion in America, 1969-1998," by S. Robert Lichter, Daniel R. Amundson, and Linda S. Lichter, reports: "Overall, we found almost no consideration of theology in the media's coverage of religion. Out of the 3,144 discussions we coded, fully 93 percent contained no spiritual dimension. Further, theological referents were disproportionally connected to non-Christian religions with a small membership in this country."

I've spent 16 years working in a newsroom, so was hardly surprised by this disclosure. Generally, journalists are ignorant of all but the most basic precepts of Christianity and Judaism —and this ignorance permeates their reporting.

The study did disclose one interesting trend. Among journalists at major news outlets, the share who say they go to church weekly increased from 8 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 1995. But this is still far below the 37 percent of the public who say they go to church or synagogue at least once a week.

Even among the small minority of the media who are churchgoers, one wonders how many take religion seriously and lead lives shaped by spiritual precepts. In most newsrooms, employment policies increasingly dictate a quest for racial, gender, and sexual-orientation diversity, but your chances of bumping into an Orthodox Jew, a traditional Catholic, a Mormon, or a born-again Christian are comparable to your chances of encountering a rapper at a chamber music recital.



On the other hand, the typical newsroom is crawling with devout secularists, ex-Catholics, and nominal Jews.

Coverage of religion from the average newspaper or newsmagazine is like music reviews from the tone-deaf or art criticism by the colorblind.

In 1993, during the Waco standoff, cult leader David Koresh frequently quoted the Book of Revelation. A number of reporters covering the siege wondered where this esoteric work could be found—demonstrating that their understanding of the New Testament was comparable to their knowledge of the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Concerning the religious divide in the State of Israel, stories regularly refer to "ultra-Orthodox Jews," a group the media esteem about as much as evangelicals. An April 14 article in the *New York Times* concerning military deferrals for yeshiva students had the subhead, "For the ultra-Orthodox, questions about equal obligations." Needless to say, "ultra" is not a term of endearment.

Yet, the coverage makes clear that the media are unaware of the diversity among traditional Jews, including modern Orthodox, yeshiva Orthodox, and Hasidim. All are lumped together according to the principle: You can always tell an "ultra" by his beard. From such reporting, the average reader wouldn't know that most religious Israelis do in fact serve in the military.

Such failures of reporting can be traced to journalists' bias against believers in traditional religion. People whose attitudes and actions are shaped by faith are viewed with suspicion, if not outright hostility and contempt.

Believers are portrayed as provincial, fanatical, intolerant, and violence prone—or, in the words of an infamous 1993 story about the religious right in the *Washington Post*, "largely poor, uneducated and easy to command." Thus, evangelical Protestants are "fundamentalists," Torah-based Judaism is "ultra-Orthodox," and Catholics loyal to Rome are, well, just plain weird.

By and large, members of the media are militant modernists. They view faith as primitive and the Bible as charming poetry but certainly not anything to be taken seriously. They can no more conceive of basing a moral judgment on a religious principle than of basing an investment decision on the phases of the moon.

However, this bias does not extend to liberal denominations (Reform Judaism, mainline Protestantism, etc.) or to traditional denominations when they take liberal stands. This can result in such amusing schizophrenia as coverage of the National

Don Feder is a syndicated columnist who aspires to be an ultra-Orthodox Jew.

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Conference of Catholic Bishops. The bishops can be either enlightened and compassionate (when they speak out against capital punishment and welfare cuts) or mean-spirited and a threat to the First Amendment (when they oppose abortion and same-sex marriage or promote education vouchers).

This pattern reflects one overriding reality: The media are agenda-driven. Reporters and editors are predominantly liberal, but nowhere more so than on social issues—abortion, gay rights, pornography, and feminism.

A 1985 *New York Times* poll of people working in the print media showed 82 percent favored abortion on demand and 89 percent supported gay rights. The same survey found that while readers approved of prayer in the public schools by a margin of 4-to-1, journalists rejected it by a margin of 3-to-1.

Not surprisingly, most members of traditional faith communities tend to be traditional in their political outlook as well. Generally, they oppose abortion, resist the legitimation of homosexual behavior, oppose the full integration of women in the military, favor school prayer, and support the public display of religious symbols.

Journalists are well aware of this. They see traditional religion as a major impediment to advancing their social policies, and this view affects their coverage of the news.

Two stories in the March 30 *Boston Globe* illustrate the way the media's worldview intrudes on their reporting of religion.

An Associated Press story on a school prayer case before the Supreme Court begins, "Prayer in public schools, for 40 years a divisive and politically charged issue, split the Supreme Court anew as the justices heard arguments yesterday over letting students lead stadium crowds in invocations at high school football games."

Only your average reporter would describe an issue on which upwards of 75 percent of the American people agree as "divisive and politically charged." By the way, you will never see abortion or gay marriage characterized in most newspapers as "divisive and politically charged," even though the public is genuinely divided on the first and overwhelmingly opposed to the second. When the media say an issue is "divisive," they mean it divides majority opinion from their opinion.

The same day, the *Globe* also covered the endorsement of homosexual marriage by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinical arm of Reform Judaism. The story begins, "Breaking with more than three millennia of tradition, the world's largest organization of rabbis voted overwhelmingly yesterday to support ceremonies, including weddings, for same-sex couples."

The piece somehow neglected to tell us exactly what those traditions are (they include very explicit biblical injunctions against same-sex sex), nor did it mention, even in passing, how much of Jewish law Reform Judaism has rejected since its founding in the 19th century, or how the movement's policies are a reflection more of the liberal ethos than the Torah worldview.

Later, the article notes the development was "denounced by conservative and orthodox Jewish movements." It did not tell readers who objected (probably a bunch of ultra-Orthodox Jews), why they objected (other than the briefest allusion to "biblical teachings"), or what they said—although it did quote Reform leaders extensively, discuss the evolution of their stand, and cover similar developments among the mainline Protestant churches. The piece was a brilliant job of selective reporting designed to advance one side of a religious controversy.

If the American Humanist Association ran schools of journalism, our coverage of religion could hardly be more biased. ♦

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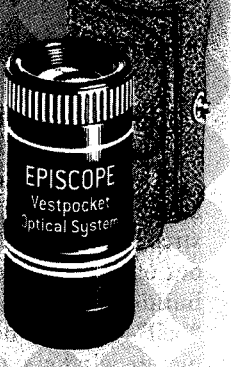

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A Yuppie Courts the Unions

Hillary makes a play for organized labor.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

EDITOR'S NOTE:
Owing to a production error in last week's issue, an article by Tucker Carlson was mistakenly printed in place of this piece by Christopher Caldwell.
Our abject apologies.

New York City

IT'S FIVE MINUTES before Hillary Clinton is due to arrive to address a rally in the 10th-floor penthouse of the New York District Council of Carpenters. An old union activist, jostled among the crowd of undergraduate campaign volunteers, mutters, "You know, this is not the kind of union hall where I saw 'Red Mike' Quill take the Transport Union out on strike."

No, it certainly is not. This part of lower Manhattan—at the corner of Hudson and Houston—used to say "light manufacturing"; now it says "espresso." Penguin Books is a block away; Saatchi & Saatchi is across the street; Internet advertisements loom out of the parking lot in front of the building. And even this union "hall"—with its beige carpets and its picture windows, its formica dais surrounded by cameras and the bomb-sniffing dogs the Secret Service brings everywhere Hillary goes—bears less resemblance to a West Village local than to the library of the Romance Languages department at some upstate SUNY.

This was the event where Hillary turned on a dime and realized she was no longer running against Rudy Giuliani. There are a lot of trade-offs to having Long Island congressman Rick Lazio as an opponent instead of the New York mayor. Lazio brings a lot of pluses. He'll run stronger upstate than Giuliani, since he brings none of the alien urban sensibility a New York City mayor does. Lazio is not a one-man get-out-the-vote effort in minority neighborhoods. Giuliani was, particularly after he mishandled the police shooting of Patrick Dorismond and saw his approval ratings plummet to an astonishing 1 percent among blacks, according to a *New York Times* poll. Right now Lazio looks like the stronger candidate. Or as a longtime New York Democratic strategist put it with considerably more precision: "He's weaker than Rudy was in January but stronger than he was in May."

But Lazio brings a couple of disadvantages, too. Either of the other two Republicans bruited to succeed Giuliani—Buffalo's Jack Quinn and Long Island's Pete King—would have been stronger among unions. Lazio has created some bad blood. "I kind of admire the guy," a scornful Jack Kittle, political director of the painters' union, says of Lazio. "He's the only politician I know who can come into your local, make a lot of promises, and break them the next day." Kittle's union is about evenly split between Republicans and Democrats, but the only thing that's kept them from endorsing Hillary is that they haven't yet been able to set a date to have her over for Roman sandwiches at the union hall in Long Island City. The building trades unions have endorsed her (some more enthusiastically than others—the plumbers are lukewarm). So has the State Federation of New York (the umbrella group that embraces all of New York's AFL-CIO unions). A measure of the solidity of Hillary's support among unions is that not one of them put an iota of pressure on her when permanent normal trade relations with China came before the Congress.

Labor plays a special role for Hillary, particularly since Giuliani can no longer be used as a scarecrow to rally blacks. Unions are the engine of minority turnout in New York. And that's what makes the Potemkin village aspect to the unionism at the Carpenters' hall so striking. A half-dozen service employees of John Sweeney's old union, the left-wing SEIU, which has already endorsed Hillary, were there in their purple T-shirts. Three department-store workers from the RWDSU were wearing their navy-blue windbreakers indoors. The Carpenters' executive director introduced the candidate, and a rank-and-file member paid tribute to the way Hillary had "listened and loined" on her tour through all 62 counties of New York.

Other than that, this was a union event only in name. The celebrities here were not the heavy hitters of the labor movement but New York City politicos, most of them from the Democrats' feminist wing, like state chairman Judith Hope and city councilwoman Kathryn Freed. The campaign volunteers handing out the made-to-look-homemade signs (New York Loves Hillary! Hillary for New York! Pro-Choice/Pro-New York/Pro-Hillary) were all rich-looking kids of college age, the boys with goatees and earrings and Brecht glasses, the (far, far more numerous) girls with bare midriffs, all of them rocking to the new Sting song, "Brand New Day," which is rapidly becoming a campaign anthem.

Nor did it sound like a union event. After a perfunctory mention of the National Labor Relations Act, labor came up almost not at all. With labor in her back pocket, Hillary seems to be focusing on her most alarming problem constituency: Jewish women, among whom Giuliani

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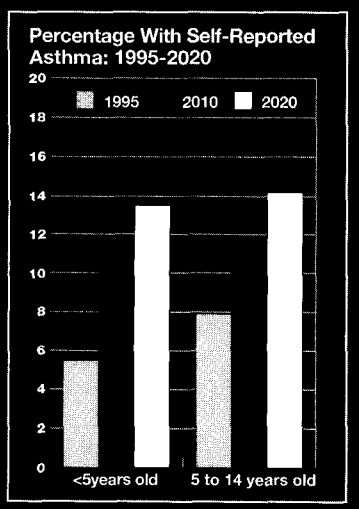
The Asthma Epidemic is on the Rise Across America

But We Can't Tell You Where or Why

"America is in the middle of an asthma epidemic – an epidemic that's getting worse, not better." That's the finding of a just-released report from the Pew Environmental Health Commission at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. To win the war on asthma, the Commission says we must start by "track[ing] asthma rates and environmental risks" – critical data collection most Americans think is already being done.



But it's not. The fact is, America has no nationwide health tracking system. And that means we have no way of knowing whether chronic and serious diseases like asthma and birth defects are striking our communities in unusual numbers. Or whether they're linked to environmental factors such as pollution, toxic waste, or pesticides.

Our nation needs a health tracking network to serve as an early warning to help prevent the spread of diseases and protect our health and communities. That's why Health-Track was created and why Congress and the Administration should take the first steps now to develop a nationwide health tracking system. It's time we know where and why asthma and other diseases are threatening our kids and communities so we can do more to stop them.

HEALTH-TRACK

YOUR HEALTH. YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW.

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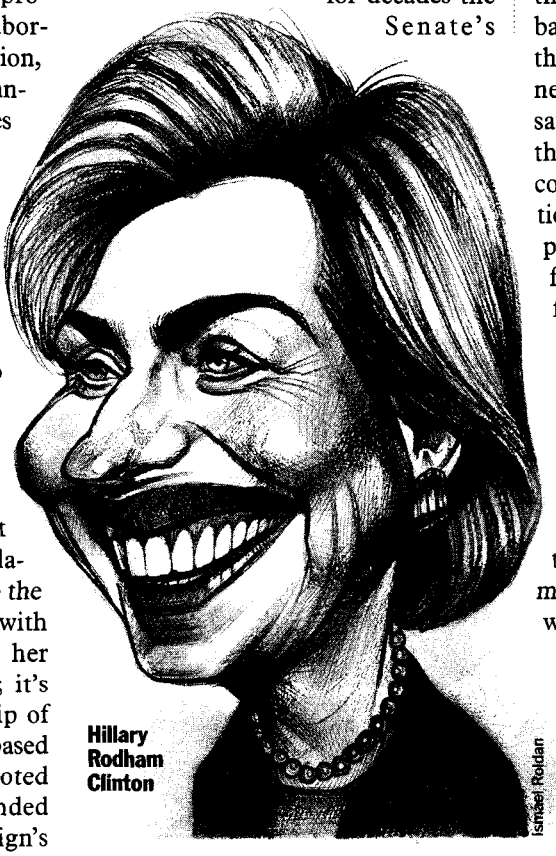
was running either even or ahead. This spells catastrophe. A Democrat trailing among New York Jews is like a Republican trailing among Indiana gun owners. Hillary has taken comfort in very early polls that show her 16 points ahead of Lazio among Jews. And she's now seeking to lock up that advantage through constant appeals to Jewish women on the one issue on which polls show them to be off the charts: abortion rights.

Since Lazio has always been pro-choice, except on partial-birth abortion (which Hillary doesn't mention, since it's a losing issue for any candidate who backs it), finding votes that show Lazio as a menace to abortion has taken some ingenuity. She focuses on funding issues, construing Hyde Amendment votes on government-funded abortions as votes on abortion itself. Thus, she is able to cast Lazio as one who "would deny choice to women serving in the military."

The Hillary campaign's premise—that Giuliani had some magical appeal to Jews that Lazio lacks—is wrong. It is Hillary's unconcealable indifference to the fate of Israel that's wrecking her with that constituency. It's not just her public embrace of Suha Arafat; it's her private and sneaky courtship of Israel's enemies. The New York-based Jewish weekly the *Forward* noted recently that Hillary had attended fund-raisers held (at her campaign's request) by Arafat crony Hani Masri and Pakistani real estate mogul Rafat Mahmood, both of whom have long records of opening their campaign spigots primarily to anti-Zionists.

With Lazio now just two points behind her, according to one poll, Hillary has decided to run a yuppie campaign whose twin pillars are television and polarization. Hillary is campaigning in New York as if it were California, as if only television mattered, and as if this were a battle between a bourgeois moderate and a crowd of kooks. Television is a good medium for Hillary because she doesn't wear well over long exposure or up-close. She's annoyingly immodest on the stump. She shouts over applause, as if it's an interruption. When she greets supporters her eyes take on a kind of goggly, maniacal gregariousness that leaves her looking like Snow White's stepmother.

Television also helps Hillary in two other ways: First, it fosters a gravitas gap between herself and Lazio. The seat the two are vying to fill, after all, is that of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, for decades the Senate's leading intellectual. Hillary's supporters reckon New Yorkers would rather replace him with a celebrity than with a boyish-looking Long Islander with a fat lip. Television also heightens national—i.e. ideological—issues over local, commonsensical, bread-and-butter ones. That polarizes the race, and polarization is a big part of the Clinton strategy. Hillary desperately wants the base-to-base contest she had until Rudy Giuliani left the race. Heating up partisanship is good politics for a New York Democrat, of course, but Hillary hasn't yet figured out how to do it. She's trying new options. She has dropped from her oratory the heretofore constant references to Lazio as a tool of Newt Gingrich. The one thing she mustn't do is play along with Lazio's strategy to cast this as a race between two middle-of-the-roaders, one likable, one not. Hence these carefully scripted attacks along ideological fault lines.



Hillary Rodham Clinton

Ismael Roldan

Can a California strategy work in New York? Who knows? Hillary remains desperately worried about the accusations that she is a carpetbagging interloper, and tries to defuse them at every turn. "When my opponent tells you where he's from," she says, "I'll tell you what I'm for." On the one hand, this canned, televised, counterfeit-poster style of presentation only feeds the perception of carpetbagging. It's not that she's not from New York—it's that she's not from anywhere. Phony, inauthentic, and scripted are the words one hears from Democrats who don't back her as much as they've backed their party's candidates in previous years.

On the other hand, New York is changing as rapidly as the rest of the country—bobofying, for the most part, but also witnessing a widening of its gap between rich and poor, which was already the nation's most yawning. A lot of new ideas are going to work in this election, and a lot of old reliable ones are going to fail. Hillary's upstate strategy, for instance—treating the Empire State as if it were Arkansas, using a cadre of teachers and government social workers to mobilize the underemployed and the underinsured—has been working beyond her wildest dreams.

Even down here on Hudson Street, all sorts of new people are moving in. All sorts of them. As we filed out after the rally, a journalist pointed out the window to a tall copper-roofed warehouse a few blocks away on Christopher Street. "Hey, you know who lives in one of the apartments in there?" he said.

"No, who?"

"Monica Lewinsky!" ♦

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Sanctimonious Slumlord

Al Gore's treatment of his Tennessee tenants gives new meaning to "compassionate liberalism."

By Matt Labash

"There is a difference between talking about compassion and actually putting your highest ideals into practice."
—Vice President Al Gore, December 2, 1998

Carthage, Tennessee

If Tracy Mayberry's life were a country song, it wouldn't be sung by the ersatz Hat Acts or New Country bunnies currently infesting the airwaves. It would be sung by the old cast of *Hee Haw*, who, for all their hokum, exhibited a certain genius for tear-in-your-beer lamentations with "Gloom, Despair and Agony On Me." The song's most poignant lyric went: "If it weren't for bad luck, / I'd have no luck at all." For as long as she can remember, that's the only luck Tracy Mayberry has known.

Now 36 years old, Tracy was unlucky at 13, when she married her first husband who beat her, then left her after she slugged him in the eye. By the age of 16, she'd met her current husband, Charles. A second-grade dropout, he hasn't had much luck either. Together, they started an unlucky family. Charles brought along four kids from a previous marriage. They had two of their own, then adopted two more—the unlucky offspring of more unlucky parents. The five kids currently living in their house suffer every malady from retardation to epileptic seizures. But luckily

Matt Labash is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard. *He took the accompanying photographs of the Mayberry residence.*

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Over the course of a year, Mayberry says she complained some 30 times to Gore's property managers, Charles and Audrey Elrod, a husband and wife team who have been in the employ of the Gore family (going back to Al's late father) for 12 years. The Elrods aren't some sort of distant managerial subcontractor. They actually live on the acreage of Pauline Gore, Al's mother. Audrey manages the staff of what Tracy's kids call "The Pink Mansion," Pauline's house on the hill across the Caney Fork River, a view of which the Mayberrys enjoy when they pop an Icehouse beer and kick back next to the belching duct-taped air-conditioning window unit on their front porch.

for the Mayberrys, they get $1,536 in monthly disability checks. It's the only money coming in, as 51-year-old Charles, a tobacco and timber cutter, is unable to ply his trade since suffering congestive heart failure five years ago. Herself a tobacco cutter, Tracy is also unable to work since her diabetic stroke. While she's without a vocation (or welfare or food stamps, which she's too proud to take), she has a new hobby: injecting herself in the stomach with two shots of insulin every day.

It might seem the Mayberrys' luck couldn't turn any worse. It did. Eighteen months ago, they escaped a cramped three-bedroom trailer in Cookeville, Tennessee, and moved to nearby Carthage, 50 miles east of Nashville. Here, Tracy thought her family lucky when they secured a $400-per-month four-bedroom rambler. But when she wrote out her rent check, her luck turned for the worse—she discovered her new landlord was Vice President Al Gore.

Not that Gore was meddlesome. Though Tracy makes her checks out directly to "Al Gore," and while the Mayberrys' house sits only 150 yards or so from that of Carthage's Washington, D.C.-bred native son, Gore has been extremely hands off. So hands off, in fact, that when Tracy complained to Gore's property managers that the plaster was coming off the walls, the linoleum was peeling off the kitchen floor, the basin of the bathroom sink was a constipated sludge puddle, the guts of one toilet tank had to be held together with Sunbeam bread bag twisties, and both bathroom toilets overflowed—when they flushed at all—(making the whole house smell, in Charles's formulation, "like sheee-it"), the managers managed not to fix anything at all.

Tracy hadn't had much luck getting any response from Gore entities, but last month, when the Post Office delivered a notice saying she had a registered letter from Al Gore, she thought she might have caught a break. After all, it wouldn't seem too tall an order for the second most powerful man in the world to make sure the Mayberrys' toilets flushed properly. He could probably even get a good deal on parts, since his wife Tipper was a shareholder in her father's plumbing supplies business (an asset that Gore's 1998 financial disclosure report valued at between $100,000 and $250,000).

But when Tracy went to pick up the letter, it wasn't actually from Gore. It was an eviction notice from Audrey, written on Gore Realty letterhead, spelled "Gore Reality." The reality of Gore Realty, admits Audrey, is that there isn't any such company, only the two rental houses Al Gore owns. "That's just something we call it," she says. According to Gore's most recent disclosure reports, he grosses $4,800 annually from the stopped-up sinkhole that is the Mayberrys' home.

The eviction letter stated that because of the unsanitary condition of the septic system and the amount of time it would take to fix, "We believe that it would be to everyone's advantage if you could find somewhere else to move. This seems to be an ongoing problem with the plumbing and it is not in the best interest or health of the people living there for us to continue renting the house." Mayberry says that Audrey told her the Secret Service would be tak-

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ing over the house, an assertion Audrey now backs away from. "Oh, that was just something I came up with," she says. "[The Gores] never said nothing about that."

True to form, Al Gore never said anything at all—at least not until Tracy Mayberry called Nashville's NewsChannel 5 on June 2, to give them a tour of the dilapidated house from which "slumlord" Gore was evicting her. The next day, Tracy received a call from the force behind Gore Reality, the vice president himself. He apologized profusely, telling Mayberry he'd known nothing about the problems. To make it up to her, and to defuse media interest, he promised to

have the place repaired, to charge her no rent until it was, to drop the eviction, and even to put the Mayberry family up somewhere while the renovations were underway if they so desired. By the end of the conversation, they were even talking dinner invites, with Tracy promising to make fried chicken, cornbread, and a peach cobbler. (She may have gotten carried away—when I ask if she'd really like to have Gore over for dinner, she says, "No. . . . He invited himself, I didn't invite him. I really don't care if I meet him or not.")

As damage control goes, Gore's strategy largely worked. The Mayberry story was nearly over before it began. Network newscasts ignored it. Most major papers ran wire copy. So did the Nashville *Tennessean*, where Gore once worked as a reporter, and whose Goreophile editor, Frank Sutherland, has appeared in a Gore campaign video.

If it were possible for Dickens to mount a comeback and this time go Southern Gothic, a stop by the Mayberry homestead would give him a good leg up on source material. The house sits a mere chaw-hock from the Gores', and is nearly as close to the Golden Nugget Lounge, a kicker bar that promises karaoke and one-dollar longnecks for the ladies. Around the perimeter of the Mayberrys' medium-sized yard is a barbed-wire cattle fence, a gentle reminder to their children not to wander off onto the Gore property where they could get intercepted by Secret Service agents or electrocuted on another interior fence. Like most rural southern settings, the Mayberrys' yard exhibits a healthy amalgam of cars and dogs. In the driveway, there's their son's beat-up '91 Camaro, Charles's '79 Bonneville with its festive coat of gray primer, a 1990 Olds Cutlass, and Tracy's Ford pickup featuring the bumper sticker "Women come and go, but you can rely on a truck" (the Mayberrys have relied on theirs since 1988).

On the dog side of the ledger, there's Miss Lady the boxer, Jake the pit bull/rottweiler mix, and four others who are tethered to trees and other immovable objects with thick timber chains. The dogs subsist on "fat meat" donated by a charitable butcher. "Sometimes they eat better than I do," says Tracy. "My husband says bologna is a poor man's steak."

As for kids, the place is crawling with them. There's 25-year-old Linda, who Tracy says is retarded, though she doesn't seem it ("Just talk to her awhile," Tracy encourages). There's also 14-year-old Anna, who is a self-described "maniac depressive," and who also experiences such severe agoraphobia that her teachers drop her lessons off at the house. Ten-year-old John, who sports an orange tank top and no shoes, is 5'3" and 211 lbs, says sister Anna, who adds, with clockwork timing, that he's on a "see-food diet . . . if he sees it—he eats it."

John remains unruffled. "I could live off cheeseburgers," he says, though he often makes do with fried potatoes

and pinto beans when money gets tight—and it always does. The Mayberrys adopted 9-year-old Candace—not knowing that she'd have occasional seizures, be mildly retarded, and be prone to making mischief at school, such as when she told her teachers that Tracy had given birth to

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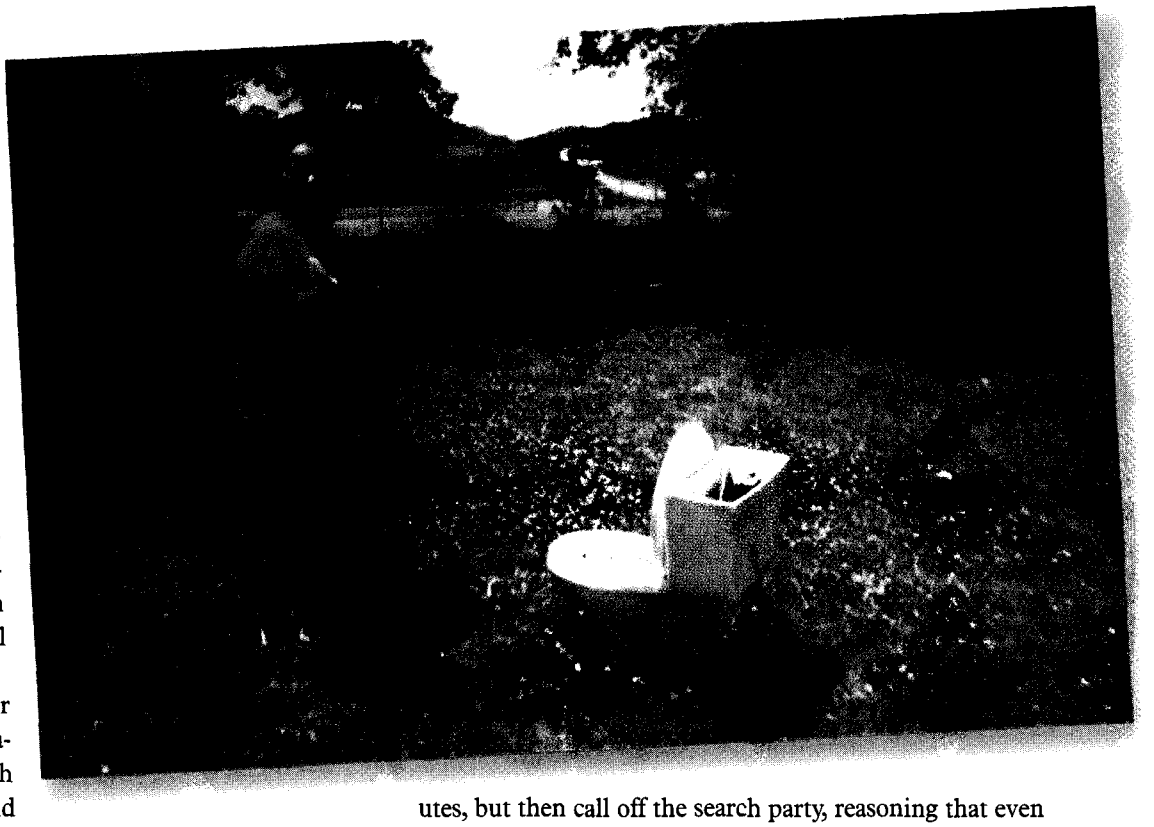
twins, killed one, and given the other away. Last up is 4-year-old Jordan, a hard-boned shirtless jumping bean, who was also adopted from a mother who drank and took drugs throughout her pregnancy, afflicting Jordan with fetal alcohol syndrome, attention deficit disorder, and God knows what else. "He's been on the Ritalin," says Tracy. "Sometimes it calms him down, other times it'll run him crazy."



Tracy sits at her kitchen table in an aquamarine Winnie-the-Pooh T-shirt, black sweats, and Birkenstocks. Since she spoke out against Gore, she's received several abusive letters from his supporters. One called her an "asshole Republican" (though she's always voted Democrat). Another said she looked like a frog. "I don't wear makeup that often," she says. "I don't dress to please anybody. Where can I afford to go?"

Though Tracy doesn't own much—not even a full set of teeth—she does have all the accouterments of a professional chain smoker, including her Marlboro 100s and a cigarette pouch with a side holster from which she draws her pink lighter. Husband Charles sits next to her, decked to his facial stubble in faded denim. He doesn't say much, and when he does, he's difficult to understand. Instead, he lets his black hat do the talking. It says, "I can't take it anymore." And indeed he can't, as Charles's nerves are shot, and he adjourns to a back bedroom where he falls asleep to the accompaniment of "Busted" from Johnny Cash's *At Folsom Prison* album.

As Tracy gives a tour of her house, she speaks of its other unnamed occupants—the rather robust arachnid population. Tracy says they've killed all kinds of spiders, from black widows to fiddle backs. In recent months, they've bought nearly 20 cans of Raid; they activate it, then go off to hunt for other houses. While we are standing in Tracy's living room, a large flying cockroach lands on the wall above my head. Tracy takes after it with her ever-ready flyswatter, but she doesn't have the wingspan. She hands it to me, and I make contact with the cockroach, dropping it to the floor—we think. We hunt for a body for several minutes, but then call off the search party, reasoning that even if we killed it, there're more where it came from.

While various repairmen scurry about the house under the eye of property manager Charles Elrod, it's clear they have quite a job ahead of them. Manhole-sized swaths of linoleum are missing from the kitchen floor, though the Elrods, along with the Gores' local lawyer, James Bass, not-so-subtly insinuate that the damage was done by the Mayberrys, since the floor coverings were replaced before they moved in 1998. (Never mind that the allegedly new linoleum pattern looks to have been out of style since 1978, that the size of the holes suggests the Mayberrys would have had to drop a jackhammer from a forklift, and that the faux-marble countertops, supposedly replaced around the same time, are in immaculate condition.)

In the hallways, there are fault lines in the ceiling and peeling plaster bordered by yellow rings, perhaps from old water damage. The paint in some places is mismatched, but it wouldn't make much difference if it were uniform, as it bears enough scuff marks to look like the inside of a handball court. A red-faced, sweaty Plumber Bob goes to town in the bathrooms, snaking and plunging, and dodging a chirpy local television reporter who wants to know if she can get some footage of Tracy "talking around the toilet."

As we huddle inside the house, we hear the chopping of helicopter blades. "Momma, it's Al Gore!" exclaims Anna. We all pile out into the yard, tending to believe Anna, since one doesn't see much helicopter traffic in Carthage—there aren't many places to land, what with all the Kissing

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Dutch Children lawn ornaments. The helicopter hovers, then disappears without revealing its passenger, but it is clearly not Al Gore. At the moment, he is in New York, promoting his "family agenda" at a $15,000-per-year Upper East Side preschool. He gets help from Rosie O'Donnell, who tells the assembly, "I'm very fortunate that I am very, very rich."

Soon after the false alarm, Plumber Bob and Elrod, who looks as if he coifs his hair with high-viscosity motor oil, haul one of the perpetually clogged toilets out into the yard. They leave a trail of water throughout the house that they don't bother swabbing up. While Plumber Bob goes after the toilet with sharp objects and a garden hose, an ugly thing happens. I'm standing in the front yard talking to Gore's man on the scene, and he begins casting aspersions on the Mayberrys. Says Elrod: "I've been aggravated to death. . . . They trashed the house. . . . When they moved in . . . it was completely new inside and out." While Elrod says Gore operatives told him that "we're supposed to be nice," he later claims he even told Tipper Gore —"I think it was in an e-mail"— that the Mayberrys were responsible for the disrepair. (A Tipper Gore spokesperson says she's heard no such thing.)

Elrod goes on to suggest that 14 people are living in the house, though only 7 do. He says the toilets have not been cleaned, though Tracy tells me she cleans her bowls at least once a week, and I spot cleaning bleach in her bathroom. He suggests that the disrepair of the walls is their fault, though the peeling plaster, for instance, is higher than any of the children's natural reach, and young Jordan would have had to launch a shotput to cause the cracks in the ceiling. Elrod even expresses regret that they weren't evicted: "I think it would be in their best interest to find another place to move."

It exhausts credulity to believe that the Elrods, Al Gore's property managers of 12 years, are speaking autonomously in this potentially incendiary situation, even as Gore apologizes and makes restitution. Letting surrogates attack, after all, is a familiar Gore campaign strategy. Gore also has a political interest in appearing not to know anything about his own rental property, particularly since Tracy Mayberry says the Elrods told her no repairs could be made without Gore's consent. She says that she implored the Elrods, on no less than five occasions, to contact Gore directly. And a few months ago, she says, she even went so far as to call the vice president's Carthage office to complain. (She was referred right back to Gore's property managers.) Still, one might be tempted to give Gore the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps he has no time for such minutiae, as he busies himself speechifying about compassion.

But when I tell Tracy Mayberry what Gore's surrogates are saying, she is no longer prepared to accept his pleas of ignorance.

"Boy that makes me mad," she says. "All I ask for is to get my house fixed, and they start attackin' me, sayin' I'm nasty. . . . You know [Gore] has to know something about it. . . . I don't have to put up with it and I'm not going to."

A day after visiting Tracy, I call for a progress report on the repairs. The first time her husband flushed the toilet, she says, it seeped water all over the floor. And, she says, the linoleum guys inadvertently created two big dents in her kitchen floor by failing to patch up holes before they laid the new covering. Tracy Mayberry has given up hope of getting lucky enough ever to see her house repaired. So she's made another plan. "I'm packin' my stuff up," she says, "and they can take this house and go to hell with it."

In a couple of days, Mayberry says, she will drop her children off at her mother's trailer, while she and her husband sleep in their truck. When they receive their disability checks on the first of the month, they'll begin looking for a new place to live. "We ain't got the money for motels right now," she says matter-of-factly.

As for Gore, he might not want to count on Tracy's vote in November, or even on a taste of that cornbread and peach cobbler. "The way I consider it," she says, "Gore can kiss my ass." ♦

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What If All Schools Were Schools of Choice?

At the rate things are changing, in ten years you may not recognize American public education.

BY CHESTER E. FINN JR., BRUNO V. MANNO, & GREGG VANOUREK

Where is the charter school movement headed? Although these independent public schools of choice were once seen as release valves for disgruntled families or safe havens for kids with problems, in urban America, they're looking like a possible alternative to the system itself, foreshadowing a far different public education system than we now know.

Nearly one-tenth of the District of Columbia's public schoolchildren now attend 27 charter schools. By September, when at least five additional charters are likely to be operating, the share of students in charters may be one-ninth. By 2001, it could be as much as one-eighth. This is an amazing development, the more so when we recall that three years ago Washington had no charter schools at all.

And the District isn't alone. Less than two years after passage of Missouri's charter law, 13.5 percent of Kansas City's children are studying in these new schools. In Arizona, the statewide rate nears 5 percent. Philadelphia has seen 25 charters spring up in two years, now accounting for more than 10 percent of that city's public schools. Nationwide, some 1,700 charter schools enroll almost 350,000 children. Education secretary Richard Riley predicts there will be 3,000 such schools by 2002.

More than half of today's charter schools are located in or near large cities. The families that are lined up at their doors—70 percent of all charters have waiting lists—are overwhelmingly fleeing education disasters. They are mostly poor families desperate enough to take chances on new schools with no track records and often operating in decrepit facilities. Private schools are not an option. Charter schools, on the other hand, have given hope to many.

Recognizing these benefits, Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, argues that transforming urban education includes "charterizing" every school. Reinventing-government guru David Osborne invites us to "imagine, for a moment, a public education system in which *every* school is a charter school."

How would a school system based on choice, autonomy, and accountability actually work? What would it look like? Join us on an imaginary education tour in the District of Columbia circa 2010, where the nation's capital has led the movement to transform America's moribund public education system:

Charter and charter-like schools have come to dominate the District's education ecosystem. Over 90 percent of the schools are publicly financed and publicly accountable schools of choice: Forty-five percent are charter schools, which are typically started by parents or teachers; another 45 percent are contract schools, which operate under management contracts with various private firms and organizations; the remaining 10 percent are private schools, down from around 40 percent at the turn of the century. The distinction between "charter" and "contract" schools is slowly disappearing, but charters are mostly indigenous, self-governing, and limited to single sites, whereas contract schools are often part of a larger network or chain and run more like a business or nonprofit franchise.

The great majority of schools obtained their charters or contracts from the newly formed District of Columbia Education Commission (DCEC), a nine-member educa-

Chester E. Finn Jr. is president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation; Bruno V. Manno is senior program associate with the Annie E. Casey Foundation; and Gregg Vanourek recently completed his MBA at Yale University. They are co-authors of the just released Charter Schools in Action: Renewing Public Education *(Princeton University Press).*

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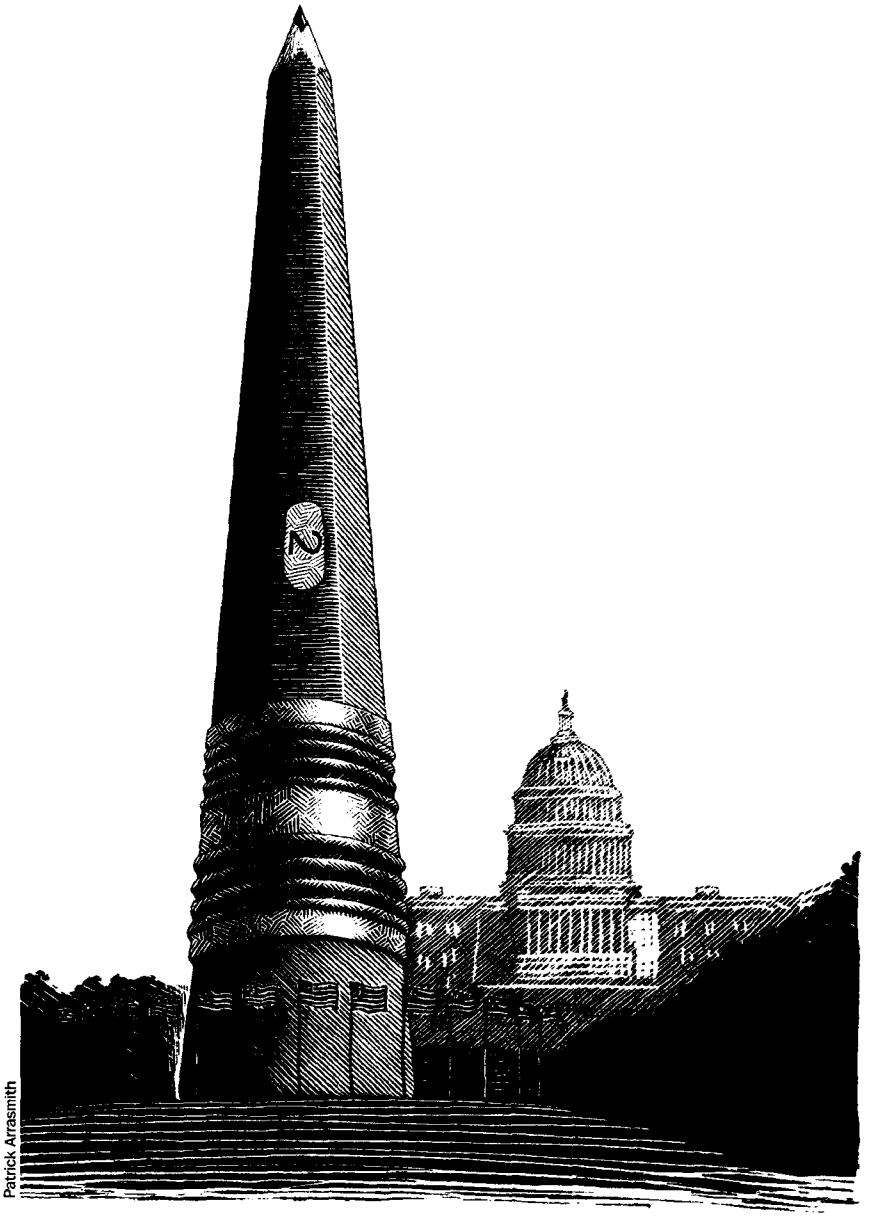
Patrick Arrasmith

tion development board appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council. Board terms for the DCEC last five years, but members may be removed by the new District Court of Education Appeals if they are judged to be irresponsible, partisan, or subject to conflicts of interest.

Since service on DCEC has become a status-conferring civic responsibility, an impressive array of talented, education-minded people have accepted the mayor's nomination. DCEC appoints its own executive director, a job for which the prime qualification is dynamite managerial skills, not education credentials. The executive director handpicks a small staff whose foremost duty is to issue and monitor the charters and contracts. (All schools with contracts obtained them from DCEC, but that is not the only route to a charter. Local universities also issue charters. George Washington University is leading this effort.)

The District also has a dozen "critical condition" schools in urgent need of reconstitution, including schools whose charters have been suspended or not renewed. DCEC's job is to turn them around or shut them down through direct management, outsourcing, or dispatching a "crisis intervention" team. During this reconstitution period, any family with a child in the school has priority in the lottery for entrance into other D.C. schools. No one is confined against his will in a critical condition school.

All D.C. schools are schools of choice, and any youngster may attend any public school in the city. All are funded on the basis of enrollments although extra money (including federal dollars) accompanies students enrolled in higher grades, disabled youngsters, and others with special needs. In addition to the basic school payment, low-income parents may, upon request to DCEC, obtain "supplemental education certificates" worth as much as $2,000 per pupil, which they can apply to a variety of educational expenses, including after-school activities, tutoring, and summer programs.

District schools do their own marketing but DCEC provides ample public information, including the huge amount of data now inscribed on "school report cards." Several community organizations, including the *Washington Post*, strive to supplement DCEC's efforts. Parents, in fact, are awash in information—which comes to them in print, over the airwaves, and via the Internet—about individual schools. Dozens of citizens serve as "school selection" mentors and advisers.

Four times a year, a big "school fair" enables families to meet face to face with school representatives to learn more about them. A month or so after each fair, DCEC

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conducts a lottery for new students (and anyone wishing to change schools). On their "preference card," parents note their three top choices and indicate any special circumstances, such as siblings already enrolled and geographic proximity.

Nearly 90 percent of District families get their first or second choice, and almost everyone gets one of their top three schools. One duty of DCEC is to find suitable slots for those who do not. So far, everyone has been successfully placed. And children who must attend a school that isn't one of their choices enjoy priority in the next lottery, should they wish to change.

The supply of new schools is growing. Oversubscribed schools often open additional campuses or turn faltering schools into branches. Most of the private firms that operate contract schools watch the lotteries like hawks for evidence of what sorts of schools the public wants, so that these can be quickly furnished.

The menu of school options in 2010 is impressive. It includes alternative programs for dropouts, "back to basics" schools, experiential learning centers, and International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement schools. There are schools run by for-profit national chains, some run by civil rights and minority groups (including the Urban League and the National Council of Negro Women), a few operated by educational and cultural organizations (including the National Geographic Society and the Kennedy Center), and still others launched by the Girl Scouts and the YMCA. There are "virtual" schools, schools located on the work sites of major employers (including the Brookings Institution, Blackboard.com, and the U.S. Senate), several dozen "mom-and-pop" charter schools, and schools specifically focused on leadership, theater, public service, or learning the English language.

The menu of school options in 2010 would include schools run by civil rights and minority groups and for-profit national chains.

From the parent's perspective, this new world is user-friendly. Many families opt to place all their children in a school that is convenient to their home or workplace. But it is also easy for parents to select schools on the basis of their pedagogy, test scores, or support services.

The District's new education system is a result of numerous factors: a wealth of information on schools, the snipping of red tape, and capital funding from public and private sources. But the trade-off is strict results-based accountability, made possible by the District's strong new academic standards and assessment system, and a steadfast commitment to reward success and intervene in cases of failure. For D.C. schools, accountability has come to mean both attracting and retaining clients and fulfilling the terms of their charters and contracts. But DCEC is not an autocratic bureaucracy. Any school that feels it has been dealt an injustice can make its way to the District Court of Education Appeals. That court also operates a less formal "magistrate's office" where students, parents, or teachers can come if their dispute with a school was not handled to their satisfaction by DCEC, or if their grievance is with DCEC itself. The mere existence of the Education Appeals Court helps keep DCEC on its toes (as do other education watchdog groups).

School accountability means more than "enforcement." Though D.C. schools are not yet perfectly transparent, a wealth of information about them is readily available to anyone. The District's school report cards contain much of it, but more is published in each school's annual report and kept up to date on school websites. One can, for example, download not only a detailed account of a school's philosophy and curriculum but also ample data on its student and staff characteristics, how it spends its money, the latest test scores, who serves on its governing board, the minutes of their meetings, and so forth. With enterprising journalists, researchers, parent groups, and others constantly scanning such information, school leaders realize that everybody knows what their school is and isn't doing. There are few secrets.

Every charter or contract school also has an annual site visit by a diverse team organized by its sponsor. Such visits yield immediate verbal feedback to the school operator and a written report that is shared with operator and sponsor. Most of the report is then published in the school's report card and put onto its website.

Every five years, a school's charter (or contract) comes up for renewal. This process entails heroic efforts by school leaders to document its performance, as well as rigorous external audits by the sponsor. There is ordinarily a public hearing, often taking the form of a "town meeting" with presentations by students, questions and challenges from the community, and explanations from school staff and board members.

The demise and reconstitution of schools contributes to the dynamism of the school system. In a typical year, a dozen schools close down, lose their contracts or charters, or are thoroughly reconstituted. Most were already

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on probation, but there are always surprises. Because these are usually painful, the city council recently authorized DCEC and its counterparts to gather more "distant early warning" data about schools.

The District is also committed to boosting the "supply side" of education. It has made grants (augmented by corporate and foundation gifts) to school incubators and technical assistance centers that help create new schools and trouble-shoot when extant schools come in harm's way.

Besides technical assistance, start-up money is available for new schools, as is access to a revolving fund for capital expenses. District schools can tap a half dozen sources of long- and short-term capital loaned by investors and bankers whose risks are mitigated by a guarantee program. This means that a low-income community group or a pair of teachers with a dream can start a school. Enterprise has also seized the construction industry, and a number of schools now occupy striking facilities that little resemble yesterday's schools.

Charter schools are having a magnetic effect on the teaching profession. Now that it's possible for almost any well-educated individual to become a provisional teacher, hundreds of people are lining up for classroom openings. Many think they want to teach for only a few years, and it remains to be seen how this will work out. Some astute school operators are experimenting with a two-tiered personnel system, in which a school organizes itself into teams, each consisting of a veteran teacher (earning roughly $100,000 annually) and a few short-termers (earning perhaps $40,000 annually). But many other variations are visible.

Each school makes its own salary decisions, but all staff members have the right to participate in the District's generous retirement system. Some schools try to cut corners on salaries, but the marketplace is lively enough that excellent teachers—and those in scarce specialties—have considerable leverage to negotiate solid compensation packages. Many schools also offer performance-based bonuses.

The teachers' union is changing, too. The most important shift was from District-wide to school-based bargaining, but changes also include unprecedented attention to professional quality control, training opportunities, productivity enhancement, and new career ladders. The industrial-era model of union operations has waned and most union contracts are flexible, more akin to the partnership agreements of a law firm than to the fruits of traditional collective bargaining.

The union itself now operates several schools, which serve as demonstration sites for fresh approaches to curriculum, instruction, staffing, and school organization. None of this has deflected the union from politics. But more and more of the organization's leadership are reasonably happy products of the new arrangement.

Public schools in the District must still employ certified teachers, but licensure no longer hinges on completing a traditional teacher-training program. Now anybody can obtain a provisional certificate who comes up clean on a background check, holds a college degree, and passes a rigorous exam that stresses subject-matter mastery. One can then earn a "regular" certificate by teaching successfully for at least two years. (All certificates must, however, be renewed every 10 years, at which time teachers' actual performance is appraised, first by their own schools, then by expert teams from the professional licensing bureau.)

Several D.C. accounting firms have opened divisions that specialize in school budgeting, payroll, and benefits. Private companies also specialize in school technology, including computer networks and website maintenance.

How is it all working? The jury is still out. Test scores are up nicely, but they remain significantly below where the District's standards say they should be. Many students still do not reach the "proficient" level. Yet dropout rates have plummeted, school violence is on the wane, and the rich-poor achievement gap is narrowing. At last count, a third of the schools were "guaranteeing" that youngsters who attend regularly and do the prescribed work would attain the academic standards.

A particularly bright spot on the education front is the enthusiasm shown by parents of disabled children. For the charter and contract schools that do not themselves focus on special-needs children, private providers of special-ed services have been a huge boon. Dozens of schools now contract with such organizations.

Amid the generally positive news about education in the District in 2010, we also note three concerns. A few conservative congressmen grump that the new system isn't saving taxpayers any money. A handful of parents complain that they suffer from information overload and must make too many choices. And a few politicians grouse that the unelected Court of Education Appeals has too much power.

Education paradise has not reached the nation's capital. But there is an unprecedented level of ferment and optimism, and early returns suggest that the new arrangements are gaining traction and improving the lives of thousands of youngsters. ♦

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Boy, Interrupted

A Tale of Sex, Lies, and Dr. Money

By CLAUDIA WINKLER

Two riveting stories intertwine in John Colapinto's page-turner, *As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl.* One is a human drama, the other a cautionary tale of science gone awry. And both display, in the stark outlines of a twentieth-century morality play, the liberating power of truth and the devastation wrought by lies.

The first is the story of David Reimer—born a healthy boy, injured at eight months in a botched circumcision, and subsequently reared as a girl—as he struggled to retain his sanity in the midst of what he would later call his "brainwashing." When finally told the facts of his birth at the age of fourteen, he threw off the false identity thrust upon him and set about painfully to become a man.

The second story is the rise and fall of the haughty and renowned sex psychologist John Money, coiner of the term "gender identity," authority on hermaphroditism, and proponent of the view that sexual identity is principally a product of the way a child is reared. It was Money who persuaded two young Canadians, Ron and Janet Reimer, that if they implemented his program of surgery, hormone treatment, and consistent female conditioning, their injured son, Bruce, would grow up into a woman able to adopt children and normal in virtually every other respect. In his professional writings, Money presented Bruce Reimer's "sex reassignment" as an unqualified success—a lie not fully and finally exposed until the publication of this book.

As Nature Made Him
The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl
by John Colapinto
HarperCollins, 279 pp., $26

It all began when two working-class teenagers in Winnipeg, in flight from their strict Mennonite upbringings, fell in love, married, and in August 1965 became the parents of identical twin boys. After the accident in which one of the babies lost his penis, only one expert gave the despondent parents hope.

Early in 1967, Ron and Janet saw a television program featuring the charismatic Dr. Money. No wonder he impressed them. He was suave and confident and came equipped with a Harvard Ph.D., a perch at the famed Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, and grants from the National Institutes of Health. In 1967, he was the man of the hour. At his instigation, Johns Hopkins had become the first hospital in America to embrace sex-change surgery. Accounts of his pioneering work in the *New York Times* and leading magazines were uniformly positive. "Indeed, of all the coverage in late 1966 and early 1967," writes Colapinto, "by far the hardest-edged" was the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation program

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the Reimers saw, and even it left a highly favorable impression. At one point, the interviewer asked a beneficiary of Money's ministrations, the attractive Mrs. Diane (née Richard) Baransky, "And now you feel complete as a woman?" "Oh, yes, definitely," she replied. "Yes. Completely—body and mind." Soon Ron and Janet were on a plane to Baltimore.

The Reimers' twins were just what John Money had been longing for: a chance to prove that his theory of the primacy of rearing over biology in the formation of gender identity held not just for people born with ambiguous anatomy but also for a normal child. Money's eagerness and conviction were compelling to the Reimers, then age twenty and twenty-one and neither with more than a ninth-grade education. "I thought, with his injury, it would be easier for Bruce to be raised as a girl—to be raised gently," Janet told Colapinto thirty years later. "He wouldn't have to prove anything, like a man had to." Ron shrank from the thought of the humiliations and frustrations in store for a male maimed in the way his son was.

So the Reimers' trips to Baltimore became annual events. There was surgery, to remove the testicles. And there were regular consultations, for the parents, for the twins together, and for "Brenda," as little Bruce became. Dr. Money impressed on the parents the necessity of never wavering in their inculcation of Brenda's femininity. In particular, the child must not be told about her birth.

But from the start, Brenda resisted feminizing. She tried to tear off her dresses and wanted to shave like Daddy and build forts and have snowball fights with her brother. Recalls her twin, Brian, "She'd get a skipping rope for a gift, and the only thing we'd use that for was to tie people up, whip people with it. She played with my toys: Tinkertoys, dump trucks. This toy sewing machine she got just sat."

Bit by bit, Colapinto evokes the nightmare that engulfed Brenda Reimer's childhood. Unable to fit in at school with either the boys or the girls, taunted by both, she fell behind socially and academically. And the annual visits to Dr. Money made things worse. Starting with her very first follow-up consultation after the castration, Brenda, then four years old, reacted with dread. Wrote Money in his notes at the time, "There was something almost maniacal about her refusals [to be tested] and the way she hit, kicked and otherwise attacked people."

Above, Brenda Reimer at age ten. Below, Dr. John Money.

Both twins were confused and repelled by Dr. Money's questioning, which, as they got older, increasingly dwelt on sex. One of Money's theories was that children need to engage in "sexual rehearsal play," mimicking copulation, as part of their normal development, and he insisted that Brenda and Brian undress and do this on their visits to him. (The twins never mentioned this to their parents; they assumed their parents knew.) Starting in 1973 when Brenda was seven, he tried to prepare her for further surgery, to excavate a vagina. She firmly refused.

Part of what makes this story so moving is the desperate vehemence with which this innately male child, though always dressed and treated as a girl from before the age of two, refused to consent to her sex reassignment. When, on what would be the Reimers' last trip to Baltimore, Dr. Money confronted the thirteen-year-old Brenda with an adult male-to-female transsexual in an effort to make the idea of surgery more appealing, Brenda bolted from the room and fled the hospital grounds. She told her mother that if she were ever forced to see Money again, she would kill herself.

Less than a year after this, Brenda, now an adolescent and increasingly alienated, started therapy with a new psychiatrist in Winnipeg, a warm and grandmotherly veteran of the profession who was able to win her patient's trust. It proved to be a turning point. Although tensions within the Reimer family were extreme, with Ron drinking and Janet battling depression, Brenda began growing psychologically stronger. Eventually, her treatment team in Winnipeg advised her parents to tell her the facts of her birth.

They did, in March 1980, and from that point on, the story becomes the inspiring one of the arduous reclamation of a life. Brenda chose a new name, David. "It reminded me of the guy with the odds stacked against him," Reimer later told Colapinto, "the guy who was facing up to a giant eight feet tall. It reminded me of courage."

Even after the embarrassing transition from Brenda to David, he suffered periods of despair, including two suicide attempts and months of voluntary isolation in a cabin in the woods. But he made a friend, in whom he managed to confide. And he had successful reconstructive surgery. One night when he was twenty-two, in his loneli-

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Left, Brian and Brenda in kindergarten. Right, David and Brian in 1980 at their uncle's wedding, where David first appeared in public as a boy.

ness, he prayed to God for the first time in his life. His prayer, he told Colapinto, was: "You know, I've had such a terrible life. I'm not going to complain to You, because You must have some idea of why You're putting me through this. But I could be a good husband if I was given the chance: I think I could be a good father, if I was given a chance." Two months later he met Jane, a mother of three, who would become his wife.

Colapinto remarks on the almost "oracular" eloquence of David Reimer, an unassuming man who works in a slaughterhouse, likes fishing and listening to Elvis, and takes pride in the role of sole breadwinner for his family. David's style is as far as possible from the cosmopolitan polish, flaunted sexual amorality, and professional hubris of his long antagonist, John Money.

A notable strength of this book is the restraint with which Colapinto presents Money's activities and their acceptance by the medical community and the mainstream press. While the reader seethes in indignation, Colapinto calmly and relentlessly piles up facts. Consider:

♦ At the time he had Bruce Reimer castrated, Money knew very well of evidence contradicting his theory about the primacy of learning over biology in psychosexual development. He knew this from research on hormones done at the University of Kansas—but also from his own work. He had just co-authored, with one of his graduate students, a study of ten girls, aged three to fourteen, who had been subjected to excesses of testosterone in utero when their mothers had taken a synthetic steroid. Nine of the ten girls had been born with masculinized genitals, and all nine demonstrated "tomboyishness," marked masculine preferences in clothing, toys, and play, and a "minimal concern for feminine frills, doll play, baby care, and household chores."

♦ Money's own 1952 Ph.D. thesis challenged the necessity of early intervention to correct unusual genitalia. It reviewed over two hundred and fifty cases of hermaphrodites who received no surgical intervention as babies. It concluded, to its author's amazement, that the majority made an "adequate adjustment" to life, manifesting neither psychosis nor neurosis. In-depth interviews with ten of the subjects "only strengthened the investigator's impression that the condition of the genitalia plays a strikingly insignificant part in the way a person develops a stable and healthy gender identity, not to mention a secure and confident self-image."

♦ Money started touting the success of his work in the "twins case" when Brenda was seven. The case was the headline-grabbing centerpiece of Money's address to the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1972 and was prominent in his book published the same day, *Man & Woman, Boy & Girl*. He made no mention, however, of Brenda's severe academic, social, and emotional difficulties, although he himself had intervened to dissuade her school from making her repeat kindergarten, and she had later repeated first grade. Money stopped bringing up the case after 1980 and deflected inquiries about its outcome, but he continued to promote surgical sex reassignment for injured or deformed baby boys.

As depressing as Money's mendacity is the ease with which he got away with it. Money's account of the twins case could not be verified since the patient's identity remained confidential, yet the lay press lapped it up. *Time* magazine called the case "strong support" for the view that "conventional patterns of masculine and feminine behavior can be altered." The authors of textbooks in pediatrics, endocrinology, and the social sciences were just as gullible. The 1979 *Textbook of Sexual Medicine*, for example, by

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Robert Kolodny and sex researchers William Masters and Virginia Johnson, maintained: "The childhood development of this (genetically male) girl has been remarkably feminine and is very different from the behavior exhibited by her identical twin brother. The normality of her development can be viewed as a substantial indication of the plasticity of human gender identity and the relative importance of social learning and conditioning in this process."

Money's work lent an aura of science to the radical feminism then politically correct. And in that heyday of radical chic, his reputation was only enhanced in some quarters by his personal outlandishness. He insisted on peppering his speech with the bluntest four-letter words. He publicly advocated open marriage, recreational sex, pornography (he was an expert witness defending the 1973 film *Deep Throat*), and the various perversions he preferred to call "paraphilias." Even in the squarer 1980s, Money deplored the "moralistic ignorance" of those who reject pedophilia. In his collected writings *Venuses Penuses* (1985), he called himself a "missionary of sex."

But just as David's story culminates in his triumph over the past, so Money's wends its way to his downfall. In 1975, his protector at Johns Hopkins was replaced as chairman of the psychiatry department by Dr. Paul McHugh, a fearless scourge of corruption in modern psychiatry. Two years later, a Hopkins psychiatrist produced a long-term follow-up study of fifty adult transsexuals treated at Hopkins since 1966. It found that none of them showed measurable improvement in his life, and McHugh had the Gender Identity Clinic summarily shut down. Soon Money's course in human sexology was dropped, and when he turned sixty-five, he was expelled from the campus.

Incredibly, however, it was only in 1997 that the complete failure of David Reimer's sex change was reported in the scientific literature. This was the doing of Milton Diamond, who had been a junior member of the University of Kansas team, back in the 1950s, that had discovered the effect on adult guinea pigs' sexual behavior of exposure to hormones in utero. In the 1960s, Diamond had challenged Money's theories head on. But more than two decades passed before he was able to track down David Reimer in Winnipeg.

It was from Diamond that David learned, to his amazement, that his case was famous—and, to his horror, that its alleged success had been cited to justify thousands of surgical sex reassignments over thirty years. This stunning information persuaded David to cooperate with Diamond and his coauthor, psychiatrist Keith Sigmundson. Their 1997 article in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* recounted the child's ordeal and pleaded for an end to the practice of surgical sex reassignment of babies.

In their article, Diamond and Sigmundson continued to preserve David's privacy, calling the patient "Joan," then "John." But with *As Nature Made Him*, the Reimers have at last stepped from behind the veil of anonymity and fully shared their story. It is their good fortune and ours that John Colapinto could present this account. A magazine journalist, Colapinto has made the most of a wealth of medical records, including transcripts and notes from psychological sessions, as well as interviews with a wide range of participants. He never stoops to invent dialogue or otherwise presume to get inside his subject's head.

Meanwhile, John Money drips with disdain for his critics, whom he sees as "lacking in the special talent for original thinking." And why shouldn't he? His diehard supporters include the National Institutes of Health. As of the summer of 1999, Colapinto reports, the latest installment in Money's thirty-five-year series of taxpayer-funded grants came to $135,956. It will be interesting to see whether the stipend survives the publication of this book. ♦

Want to Be a Millionaire?

If you do, practice the traditional American virtues.

BY FRED BARNES

Thomas J. Stanley is a former professor of marketing at Georgia State University and coauthor, with William D. Danko, of the spectacular bestseller *The Millionaire Next Door* (1996). It was a groundbreaking book that transformed the idea of who becomes a millionaire (average folks with grit, not geniuses) and how they get there (frugality, not high income). *The Millionaire Next Door* was enormously encouraging, a series of populist case studies of wealth creation by people who don't look, act, or talk like Donald Trump.

The Millionaire Mind
by Thomas J. Stanley
Andrews McMeel, 406 pp., $26.95

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Now, with *The Millionaire Mind*, Stanley has produced a follow-up bestseller by surveying 733 millionaires and learning from them the qualities and choices that matter in achieving economic success. The book is a paean to hard work, risk-taking, and traditional values. It's also the most compelling defense of democracy and free markets since George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty* two decades ago.

The Millionaire Mind doesn't read like an apologia for the American model, and I doubt if Stanley intended it to be. It's not ideological or political. But it is filled with success stories that could have happened only in this country, and it extols character traits that

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practically every American has or can acquire. On the last page, Stanley summarizes "the eight important elements of the economic success equation." Inheriting a wad and getting lucky in the stock market aren't among them. Instead, he lists things like "a balanced lifestyle," having an "economically productive household," picking a vocation you love, and working hard with integrity and focus.

There's nothing novel in those. But two factors drawn from Stanley's interviews with millionaires are new, and his examination of them lifts *The Millionaire Mind* well above the ordinary run of get-rich-fast business books. The first factor is brains, grades, and test scores. What's important is their irrelevance. Forget everything you've read about how a meritocracy based on SAT scores and diplomas from prestige schools is taking over the country; forget Nicholas Lemann's *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy* and even Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve*. Stanley has discovered, from a few scholars but mostly from millionaires themselves, that grades and test scores "do not explain a statistically significant portion of the variation in wealth or income."

In fact, academic success is sometimes a hindrance, since it leads to good jobs right out of college or graduate school and reduces the need for risk-taking that can lead to riches. Most millionaires were told, at some point in their lives, that they were not intellectually talented, not a candidate for law or medical school, not qualified to get an MBA, or not smart enough to get ahead in just about any field. Most aren't brainy "in the analytical sense," Stanley writes. And because they didn't receive all A's or score above 1,400 on the college boards, "they decided not to compete in macho dogfight environments where superior analytical intelligence is a requirement to succeed." Instead, many chose to employ themselves, *The Millionaire Mind* points out, hiring themselves "when other employers would not." Their success was based on hard work, recovering from setbacks, and deflecting "even the harshest evaluations by some of the nastiest critics."

Stanley gives special attention to what he calls the "900 club." It consists of millionaires who scored less than 1,000 on their SATs. "A minority of millionaires fall into this category," he writes. "But the point is that it's possible to become an economic success with scores that are mediocre or worse." In school, they "learned to fight" to be successful, "though they were labeled as having just average or less ability."

"They discovered there are other significant factors in the wealth equation"—and not merely hard work. Stanley says members of the "900 club" rate "being honest" as a significant success factor, along with having a supportive spouse. They often credit a teacher or mentor with inspiring them. They believe part-time work during college taught them they didn't want to be desk clerks or waiters. They believe competitive sports helped. "Perhaps this experience had something to do with their ability to deal with criticisms of detractors and 'win games' they were predicted to lose," Stanley suggests.

The book offers a special note to parents of poor students: "Far too often parents with good intentions unknowingly condemn their own children to a life of low economic productivity by telling them ten thousand times: You will never amount to anything if you don't do well in school." Not only is it untrue, but harping on the subject may condition a child's mind "to respond negatively to cues concerning wealth-building opportunities."

The other new factor in reaching millionairehood—new to me, anyway—is what Stanley calls "choice of spouse." It's Chapter Six in the book, but I looked at it first and read passages aloud to my wife Barbara. Maybe we shouldn't have been, but we were surprised at the overwhelming relation between a good marriage and economic achievement. Millionaires, it turns out, have one-third the divorce rate of average American couples. "The positive correlation between length of marriage and level of wealth is very strong and holds true throughout all education and income groups in America," Stanley says.

When millionaires describe their mates, they talk about how they are "down to earth" and "patient" and "my emotional backbone" and have traditional values. "Most wives in millionaire households . . . feel that the man of the house should be the main income generator," Stanley writes. "The men share this view." Millionaire couples operate as a unit, with a division of labor. They don't marry for money, but they tend to be very frugal. And, Stanley notes, "two out of three millionaires indicated that the moderate drinker or abstainer quality of a spouse was also important in contributing to a successful marriage."

There are many riveting anecdotes in *The Millionaire Mind*, including one about a divorced woman in her early thirties named Terry. She had one child and was eager to remarry, but dreaded "going back to the dating game." She believed in the "traditional family concept" and didn't relish going to singles bars. She wanted to find a husband with stability, honesty, self-discipline—all traits Stanley has come to identify with potential millionaires. "If she were your friend, sister, or daughter, what would you suggest that Terry do?" Stanley asks. "I told her to join a church group. I believe one is likely to find better prospects in a church than in singles bars . . . Where is the higher concentration of people with traditional values likely to be found? I'll pick the church environment over any singles bar."

For all its virtues, *The Millionaire Mind* is too long, a bit repetitive, and lacks an index. Stanley is modest about his own ability as a writer, and he has reason to be. But this is more than offset by his expertise. He's the world's greatest expert on American millionaires, and he's not afraid to endorse the square values that produced their economic success. If you doubt America still works, your qualms will dissolve as you read this book. ♦

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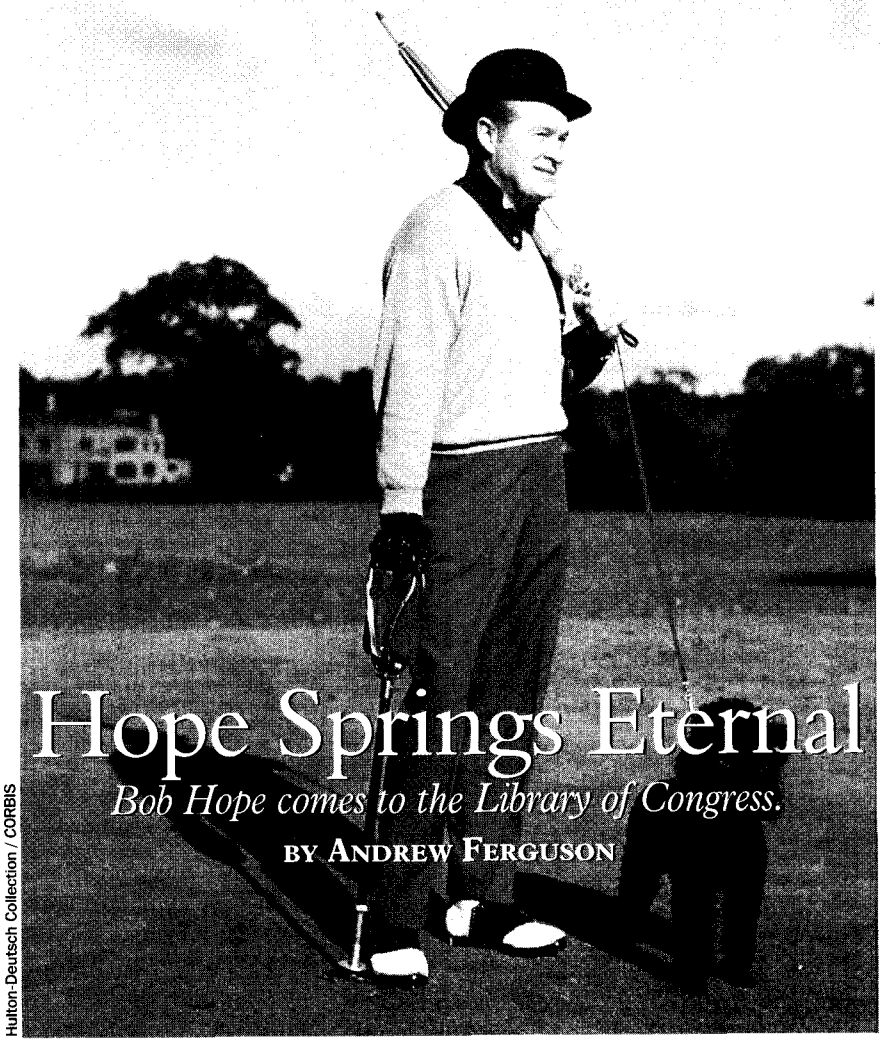

Hulton-Deutsch Collection / CORBIS

Hope Springs Eternal

Bob Hope comes to the Library of Congress.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

Every American over the age of fifteen remembers Bob Hope, and I suppose everyone under the age of fifty remembers him in a particular way. We might see him in army helmet and flak jacket, waggling his golf club at the troops from a massive outdoor stage in Khe Sahn. Or maybe we can unspool a few frames of him clowning with Bing Crosby in one of their interchangeable *Road to . . .* pictures from the 1940s. But mostly, and indelibly, we remember him from television.

The first of Hope's television specials was broadcast in 1950, the last almost half a century later, in 1997. In between were 280 more. During the 1950s and 1960s, they routinely took in a forty "share" in the ratings, and often higher—meaning that at least 40 percent of the television sets in use at that moment were tuned to Hope as he raced through his monologues, in a suit with padded shoulders and a too-tight waist and a tie as wide as an interstate, or as he squinted at cue cards in a sketch with Phyllis Diller or Connie Stevens, or as he signed off in his warbly tenor with his theme song, "Thanks for the Memory." Off and on throughout the hour a laugh track would rage thunderously, combining the recorded convulsions of hundreds, if not thousands, of fans, beamed into living rooms across the country, where many more millions of teenagers sat, hunched before the screen, puzzled: *Why are all these people laughing?*

For baby boomers of a certain (rapidly advancing) age, Bob Hope's popularity is one of the enduring cultural mysteries. Unexpectedly, however, we now have a better chance of solving it than ever before, thanks to the Library of Congress, of all places, and thanks also to Hope himself, who has bankrolled the library's new "Bob Hope Gallery of American Entertainment," which opened last month in an out-of-the-way corner of the Jefferson Building on Capitol Hill. The gallery's first show is—no surprise here—called "Bob Hope and American Variety." Drawn from Hope's own vast archives (which his family has begun generously to disgorge into the Library of Congress's yawning maw) as well as from bits of other collections, the exhibit aims to tell not only Hope's story but also the story of twentieth-century American popular entertainment. It is hard, in fact, to tell one story without reference to the other.

Bob Hope, christened Leslie Townes Hope, was an immigrant. Born in England in 1903, he was brought to Cleveland by his ne'er-do-well father and a mother bedazzled by show business. He left school at sixteen, and at his mother's urging turned to dancing and clowning as a way to help support the family. Before long vaudeville beckoned. It is a theme of the exhibit that the conventions of vaudeville pervade popular culture even today, seventy years after its formal demise—surviving in the monologues of late-night comedians, for example, or in the variety-format of Las Vegas revues. But if this is vaudeville, it is so only in a sadly attenuated form; the thing in its original state was a short step up the evolutionary ladder from the carnival midway. The chief characteristic of vaudeville—as the exhibit itself makes plain—was an extravagant preoccupation with eccentricity and freakishness, both human and non-. A typical show might comprise a dozen acts, each more unnerving than the last: contortionists, dancing bears, acrobats, strongmen, fiddle-playing baboons, speed-talkers, comics notable for their obesity, their feebleness, their speech impediments, or their dead-on embodiment of one ethnic stereotype or another. Hope's first success came when he and a male partner teamed up with the Hilton sisters, a pair of Siamese twins. ("I never dated them," he said later. "They were too much woman for me.")

The exhibit excels at conveying this raucously anarchic atmosphere, through an unexpected blending of

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odds and ends—everything from railroad timetables and newspaper reviews to audio recordings and silent film clips of long-forgotten acts. In the small-time circuits where Hope began, shows ran continuously through the day and into the evening; big-time acts could get away with two performances a night. Transportation and accommodations were primitive; Hope's first partner died of ptomaine poisoning contracted in an Ohio greasy spoon. He found other partners—there was a bottomless supply—but by the late 1920s Hope had stumbled upon his true calling. In Newcastle, Pennsylvania, one evening, the show's master of ceremonies took sick. Hope was asked to introduce the next act. His introduction dragged on into an extemporized monologue that brought down the house. By the end of the show he had decided to strike out on his own as a solo act.

On the circuit thereafter, Hope toured as a master of ceremonies—a role quite different from his earlier bread-and-butter as a song and dance man. By introducing the acts and occasionally letting the audience in on backstage goings-on, the emcee placed himself as an intermediary between the spectator and the performer, neither one nor the other but containing elements of each. The persona Hope created for himself was avowedly a figure of fun—the butt of jokes from pretty girls and the target of taunts from hecklers planted in the audience—which made him at once a performer and a character sympathetic to the paying customers. He was a fella just like them. Not *just* like them, of course, but close enough for show biz: Hope on stage was cocky and cowardly, irreverent and jumpy, fast-talking and witty, and, above all, lecherous—but too inept and self-involved to do much about it.

It was the first duty of a vaudevillian, wrote the critic Brooks Atkinson, "to break down the resistance of the house by direct force of personality." And this, it transpired, was Hope's great gift. In the dozens of film clips on view at the Library of Congress, the most illuminating (and, for my money, the most enjoyable) comes from a special episode of the Ed Sullivan show, in 1955, in which Hope recreates an ancient vaudeville routine. Vaudeville had been dead for twenty years, and even in 1955 the lines might have seemed stale: "Girls, ha! I never give 'em a second thought. My first thought covers everything." But what pretty much hops off the screen is Hope's high-wattage energy,

Bob Hope with his dancing partner, 1923.

an almost physical delight in the mere act of being before an audience and trying, trying, trying to get laughs. His every step across the stage is a furlong stride. He wears a checkered suit and spats and a big bow tie. His fingers toy nervously with an unlit cigarillo. A bowler two sizes too small tips precariously on his head. And the patter never stops. He's a ham, he knows it, he wants you to watch him, he can't get enough of you watching him. It is show business in purest form, at its least apologetic, thoroughly uncorrupted by irony and far too full of itself to be slowed down by self-consciousness.

With some revisions, this was the character Hope carried with him into radio, where his celebrity and success multiplied many times over. Traveling fifty weeks a year on the circuit, playing to a different audience every night, the emcee could get by with a half-hour's worth of material, recycled show after show. Radio allowed for no such luxury. "My style," he said many years later, "was joke joke joke." His radio show, sponsored by Pepsodent, called for thirty-nine half-hour broadcasts a year—or roughly thirty-nine times the number of jokes he had required for a season of vaudeville (writing some jokes himself, stealing others, cribbing some from the public domain, and buying still more from an older comic he kept on retainer).

Already a star, Hope signed with NBC radio for a weekly salary of $2,500; from that sum he hired eight writers at $100 a week. "All these comedy minds were necessary if I was going to carry out my plan, which was almost unheard of at that time," Hope later wrote in a 1990 memoir, *Don't Shoot, It's Only Me*, which was, appropriately enough, written by one of his longtime writers, Mel Shavelson. "It was to go on the air every week with topical jokes written right up to airtime." By contrast, Jack Benny, host of another popular variety show, had only two writers, and Fred Allen, the greatest of the radio comedians, wrote most of his stuff himself. But Benny, Allen, and Hope's other competitors contented themselves with sketch comedy. Hope devoted a solid third of each Pepsodent broadcast to a monologue, which he believed gave his show an immediacy the others lacked. It also, happily enough, established him as a kind of national kibbitzer, a rogue commentator on politics, show business, sports, and every other topic of barbershop chitchat.

Hope's method was highly routinized. Each week the writers, working in teams assigned by him, produced as much as two hours of jokes,

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which Hope would try out before a studio audience at a preview two nights before the show. The writers, closeted in a control booth, encoded each joke according to the laugh it received, from *dud* to *superboffo*. Whittling mercilessly, Hope and his staff had produced by showtime a surefire ten minutes. "In those days," he wrote, "we had no laugh track to create hilarity on cue."

Countless legends surround Hope's relationship with his writers. He employed more than one hundred of them over his long career, and several, not surprisingly, left embittered. (They're writers.) Once on retainer, they were expected cheerfully to receive calls from him day or night, to produce jokes on demand and on the spot, for whatever occasion presented itself.

It is apparently true, too, that on payday Hope would ascend a staircase in his office, call out his writers' names one by one, fold their checks into paper airplanes, and send them sailing to the floor, forcing the hacks to scramble after them—the act of either a whimsical boss or a sadist, depending on your point of view.

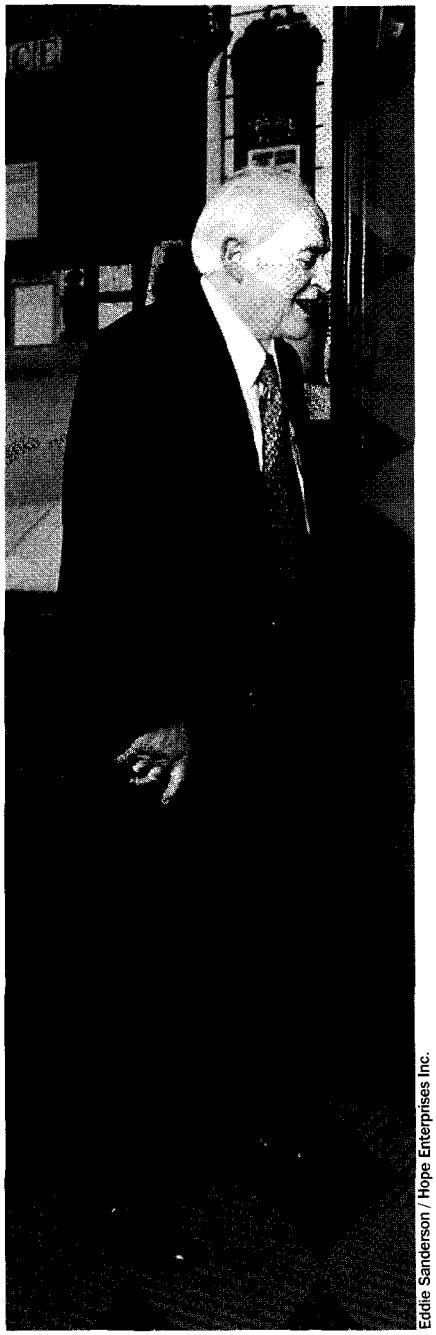
But he was never coy about his use of hirelings for humor. Before too long, in fact, his dependence on writers became a trademark. (Hope had lots of these running gags; recall his failure to win an Oscar, which he "complained" about on the sixteen Academy Awards shows he hosted, from 1940 to the late 1970s.) "Having so many writers has its disadvantages," he said on one TV special. "Every time I want to ask them a question, I have to hire Gallup to take a poll." Like all the others, these writer jokes were written by his writers—years before anyone had thought of postmodernism.

Hope's reliance on gagmen made his enormous fame possible. In addition to his radio and then his television broadcasts, he averaged nearly two hundred personal appearances a year, creating a demand for jokes that could be satisfied in no other way. But the efficiency came at a cost. Though he of course delivered the jokes—expertly, for the most part—and though he remained the final editor who selected them and organized them into routines, Hope more and more became the creature of his writers, and of the assembly line they manned and that he had himself created. As a consequence, there was a dilution of the roguish persona that had once strutted across the vaudeville stage—the original source of his popularity. But by the time Bob Hope arrived on TV, in the early 1950s, something else had happened, too. He had become an institution.

Hope did his first performance at a military installation in May 1941, several months before the start of World War II. He agreed to the broadcast at the insistence of a Pepsodent executive, who wanted to do a favor for his brother stationed at March airfield in Riverside, California. Hope brought his cast and crew to the base and opened, of course, with a joke: "Good evening ladies and gentlemen. This is Bob 'March Field' Hope telling all aviators, while we can't advise you on how to protect your 'chutes, there's nothing like Pepsodent to protect your toots."

The volcanic laughter that greeted this joke is inconceivable to us today, for many reasons. Hope himself confesses to having been startled at the time. But as one lame line followed another, the laughter if anything intensified. And then, as Hope would later tell it, he understood: He had found an audience that was so grateful for his presence it would laugh at almost anything. And it sounded blissful on the radio. The next week, back in Hollywood, Hope found the studio audience "tough and unreasonable." And it probably was, by comparison. "They wouldn't laugh at the jokes unless they were funny." He booked the following week's show for the naval base in San Diego.

And for the next seven years, until June 1948, every Hope show but two was broadcast from a military base, whether here or in Europe or in the Pacific. He went into the war a radio


Eddie Sanderson / Hope Enterprises Inc.

Bob Hope, at the Library of Congress, 2000.

comedian and came out a national hero. Too old for the draft, he was inexhaustible in his service to the servicemen, unstinting with his time and energy and talents. Frequently he put himself at risk to do shows or visit hospitals under fire.

On Christmas 1948 he went to Berlin for the airlift. Two years later he was in Korea. After Castro's revolution he went to Guantanamo. Then came nine tours of Vietnam, and on to

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Both photos this page: Bob Hope Collection, Library of Congress

Above, Hope entertaining the troops, 1969. Below, with Desi Arnaz and others, 1946.

Beirut in 1983 and then to the Persian Gulf in 1990. He was friends with every president from Roosevelt to Bush, a sought-after pitchman for every company that could afford him. General Motors paid him $100,000 merely to walk through their exhibit at an auto show. He was knighted by the queen, given the Medal of Freedom by President Johnson, awarded fifty-four doctorates, and honored, in an act of profound supererogation, with the title "most honored entertainer of all time" by the Guinness Book of Records.

An establishmentarian is a dangerous thing for a comedian to be. Hope was still topical, but his specialty was, in the deadly phrase, "poking gentle fun." Sure, he could take on the presidents:

"That Ike—he's all army. He loves golf, but if you lose, you not only have to pay him, he makes you eat K-rations."

"President Johnson says he wants to get started on his 'Great Society.' I don't know exactly how it's gonna work, but I think he wants Texas to adopt the rest of us."

To the credit of its curators, the Library of Congress exhibit touches on this latter half of Hope's career—there's a letter from Richard Nixon, the golf club from a Vietnam show, clips from a 1970 TV special—but declines to dwell on it. When you hear the limp jokes from those years, answered by the ghostly laugh track, you get the sense you're not really hearing comedy so much as a ritual—the laughs Hope extruded from his audience were from force of habit, or perhaps a grateful tribute offered to a fond and well-meaning public servant.

At the center of this part of the exhibit is Hope's famous joke file, which Hope accumulated over decades and stored in a fireproof vault on the grounds of his California estate. The pages have now been digitally scanned and are retrievable through a touch-screen monitor: four-hundred thousand jokes, on eighty-eight thousand pages, indexed by category.

And almost none of them are funny! These products of the Hope assembly line—scarcely a laugh in the whole bunch! I've stood in the Bob Hope Gallery, watching the crowds stab at the joke file. Almost every visitor, from sullen high-school kids to balding boomers, turns away after reading a few gags, looking politely puzzled—as people of a certain age always have when confronted with Bob Hope. Piled one on top of another the jokes show Hope as we saw him in mid-century, less an individual entertainer than a brand name of American mass culture. In baked goods, there was Hostess; in cars there was Ford; in religion there was Billy Graham; and in comedy there was Hope: tepid, inoffensive, a distillation of mediocrity. If you've ever wondered whether the Sixties were necessary—if you've ever wondered what brought on the revolution in popular culture—look no further than Bob Hope. ♦

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GOP Says It Seeks to Avoid Partisan Vitriol at Convention
—*New York Times* headline, June 8, 2000

Parody

Republican National Convention

Schedule
Tuesday, August 1, 2000

7:05 P.M. OPENING GAVEL, Mr. Rogers presiding

7:07 MR. ROGERS SINGS "Won't You Be My Neighbor?"

7:12 STRETCHING AND AEROBICS, Richard Simmons and Log Cabin Choir

7:22 INVOCATION, Rev. Al Sharpton

7:30 MR. ROGERS RETURNS for a trip via trolley to the Neighborhood of Make Believe Interview with King Friday XIII on the importance of cleaning up one's room

7:45 "WHAT BEING REPUBLICAN MEANS TO ME," Rep. Connie Morella

8:00 THE DEMOCRATIC RESPONSE, Mario Cuomo

8:20 PRESENTATION OF THE BARRY GOLDWATER LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD to Don Knotts, The Man Who Makes Us Laugh

8:27 INSPIRING PEOPLE IN WHEELCHAIRS ROLL ACROSS THE STAGE

8:35 "IT'S A SMALL WORLD (AFTER ALL)," performed by Up With People, with musical accompaniment by Zamfir on the Pan Flute

9:00 "ANTIQUES ROADSHOW: Live From the Republican Convention"

9:30 TRUE LIFE STORIES OF CHILDREN who have recovered from life-threatening illnesses, Bryant Gumbel hosts

9:50 TRENT LOTT SPEECH, "Happy Memories From the Cheerleading Squad"

9:52 PLATFORM COMMITTEE DOMESTIC POLICY REPORT: "It's Fun To Recycle"

9:59 MUSICAL NUMBER: "¡Se Habla Español!" performed by Charo

10:08 MILLIONAIRES' MARCH: Steve Forbes and brothers report on hike from New Jersey to Philadelphia to raise breast cancer awareness

10:18 "GEORGE W. BUSH: PET OWNER," a series of testimonials from veterinarians and others who have seen the GOP nominee show genuine concern for small animals

10:22 VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING SPEECH, Mary Lou Retton

10:30 VICE PRESIDENTIAL ACCEPTANCE SPEECH: "Times I Felt Sad, and What I Thought Of To Make Me Feel Happy" (identity of vice presidential nominee TBA)

11:15 OVATION

11:20 "WE ARE THE WORLD" SING-ALONG

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Counterrevolution in the Classroom

William Damon is a senior fellow, Hoover Institution; director, Stanford Center on Adolescence; and professor of education, Stanford University.

Those of us who dwell on campuses and read the *Chronicle of Higher Education* have noticed a recent counterrevolution in the teaching of college humanities. The winds have shifted away from the "deconstructionist" criticism that uncovered hidden themes of race, class, and gender to the more direct "teaching of the text." Aesthetics have become popular again. Instructors have once again taken up the charge of showing students why and how people can perceive beauty in a Shakespearian sonnet or a Rembrandt portrait. Back in style are the profound lessons of truth and meaning.

Why the change? It seems that market forces do work. Students were checking out from obscure, agenda-driven, negative courses dominated by critical theory, finding little reason to sit through the lectures or read the assignments. If the classic texts were seen as neither beautiful nor true, but were taught simply as indications of exploitations long past, why bother with them? The return of *appreciation* for the texts is reawakening student interest.

A similar counterrevolution is needed in teaching historical and civic understanding to elementary and secondary school students. **The rage among trendsetters is "cosmopolitan education," a notion that sets itself in opposition to traditional values such as patriotism.** One leading educator, for example, urges schools to avoid instilling "irrational" patriotism "full of color and intensity and passion," claiming that the notion of national belonging "reinforces this kind of irrationality, by lending to what is an accident of history a false air of moral weight and glory." Combined with a teaching of history that emphasizes our country's sins rather than its achievements, the message that students are receiving is negative. My high school daughter (and even her young history teacher, I fear) know far more about how settlers mistreated Native Americans than about how they created the Bill of Rights or outlawed the slave trade.

Critical thinking is essential for any citizen in a democracy, and schools must foster it. But when we *begin* with a critical tone and lean on it repeatedly, students become disaffected. A sense of positive identification is a prerequisite for constructive engagement. Young people need to *care about* something enough to bother criticizing it and improving it.

Young people have turned away from civic engagement to an extent never before witnessed in our society. Voting among 18–24-year-olds, their interest in political campaigns, even their willingness to run for school offices, have all declined sharply over the past twenty-five years. To foster in our young a positive identification with their civil society, we need to give them compelling reasons to become attached.

We must begin by telling students about the best of our traditions and the finest episodes in our history and why so many of their forbearers cherished those traditions enough to devote and even sacrifice their lives to preserve them. We must show the young why patriotism in its noblest sense—open, inclusive, the heart and soul of our free and democratic society—is a virtue and not a vice.

— *William Damon*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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